

**LEE**

**A Portrait of  
Lee  
Harvey  
Oswald**

**by His Brother  
ROBERT  
OSWALD**

**with Myrick and Barbara Land**

**W**HAT were the forces that twisted Lee Harvey Oswald's mind as a child and finally drove him to murder?

*What strange events took place behind the scenes as the Oswald family faced the FBI and the Secret Service after the assassination?*

*Who were the friends in Dallas who kept Oswald's rifle for him?*

In this extraordinarily revealing biography of his brother, Robert L. Oswald sheds new light on Lee Harvey Oswald's life and on many questions about the assassination that remain unanswered.

Unlike his mother and late brother, who was driven to seek recognition, Robert Oswald has until now shunned the limelight. A respectable Texas businessman, he remained silent for three years despite constant pressure for his views on the assassination. *LEE* is the result of his concern over the recent pileup of misinformation on his brother and rank speculation about the assassination. In this explosive book he sets the record straight on the influences that led his brother to the final act of destruction, and he points to impressive evidence that Lee may not have originated the idea of killing the President and that others may have helped and encouraged him.

Robert Oswald's confrontation with Lee in the Dallas jail after the assassination, his efforts to protect Marina from promoters, his experiences before the Warren Commission, and a startling call he received much later from one of the authors of the Report—these, too, are part of this dramatic account that provides a unique perspective on what happened in November, 1963.

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Oswald,

Lee; a portrait of Lee

Lee

Harvey Oswald by his

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*LEE*



# LEE

*A Portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald  
by His Brother*

Robert L. Oswald

WITH MYRICK AND BARBARA LAND



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*I dedicate this book to all those people—friends, acquaintances, and strangers—who displayed extraordinary compassion during the darkest days of my life and made it possible for me to survive the tragedy of November 22, 1963.*

*I also wish to pay a special tribute to my wife and our two children, who have borne the additional burden of my preoccupation with the events of that day and my attempt to understand what led to that somber act of violence.*



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Part One: *November 22, 1963*



## *Chapter One*

I WENT down to my office at the Acme Brick Company about 7:15 on Friday morning, November 22, 1963. Several Acme executives were coming from the company headquarters in Fort Worth to Denton, Texas, to discuss production plans for the months ahead. I was then a senior sales coordinator for Acme, and was asked to attend the meeting.

Acme had opened a new plant in Denton a couple of months earlier, and during the meeting that Friday morning we decided what varieties of bricks we would continue producing in the new plant and which blends we would discontinue because of manufacturing difficulties or market requirements. We had made considerable progress by noon, when we broke for lunch. All six of us then went to Jay's Grill, a steak and seafood restaurant not far from the plant, and spent about an hour there. As we ate our hamburgers or small steaks, we were all relaxed, feeling that we faced no problems we wouldn't be able to handle.

About 1:15 we were standing near the cashier's desk while one of the company vice-presidents paid the check for the group. The cashier gave me her usual smile—a kind of commercial smile—and then said very calmly as she counted out the change, "Have you heard? The President has been shot in Dallas."

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"Are you sure?" one of the Acme executives asked.

"No, I'm not sure," she said. "Someone just told me they heard it over the radio."

When we asked for more details, she said that was all she knew about it. We were not quite certain how to react. For a moment, I think we all felt that this might even be somebody's idea of a joke.

As soon as we reached the car, one of the men turned on the radio, and we heard the vague and confused early reports. The brief bulletins did not make it clear just how seriously the President was wounded, but we were all stunned.

I had voted for John Kennedy in 1960, partly because I then had very strong reservations about Richard Nixon, but in the years since his election I had cooled toward him. I felt that he had centralized too much power in the Federal government. I have one special hero in American history, Thomas Jefferson, and I think his basic belief is illustrated in the statement, "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we would soon want for bread." I respected Kennedy's ability but did not agree with his political philosophy.

Some of the others in the car were far more strongly anti-Kennedy than I was, but the news shook them too. "Damn it," one man said, "I wanted him out of office, but not this way."

Acme has two plants in Denton, and we drove over to the old one to look at some new products being made there. On the way, we were listening closely to the news bulletins. Just before we reached the plant entrance, we heard the announcer say that the police were looking for one particular suspect: a male, white, slender, weighing about 165 pounds, about 5 feet 10 inches tall, in his early thirties.

I remember noting each of the details in that description

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and deciding that I did not know anyone who could be described precisely in that way.

I also thought for a moment of my brother, Lee Harvey Oswald. I had not seen Lee for a year, and had not heard from him for about eight months, but the last time I had received word from him he was working in Dallas. I wondered whether he had taken a few minutes off to watch the Presidential motorcade through the city.

Since the executives had made a special trip down from Fort Worth for the day, and we still had some important decisions to make, we went on into the old Denton plant without waiting for later developments. We had been inside only a few moments when the foreman came over to us and said, "The President is dead."

Suddenly our business no longer seemed so vital to any of us. The six of us went back to the car and drove over to the new plant, where my office was located. As we drove up, one of the senior executives said, "Lower the flag to half-mast," and this was done promptly.

Inside the building, I recalled that I had some invoices on my desk that the timekeeper should check for me. My office was on one side of the company reception area and the timekeeper's was on the other. I took the invoices across to his office and was hurrying back toward mine, since a lot of work had piled up on my desk and I wanted to clear it up before the weekend. Just as I turned to leave his office, I suddenly heard the name "Oswald." I thought someone was calling me. But then I realized that the sound had come from a transistor radio on the receptionist's desk, and the receptionist—a widow in her mid-forties—was crying.

The name had been mentioned in a news bulletin, and now that I was concentrating on the sound I heard it repeated—this time the full name, "Lee Harvey Oswald."

## LEE—Part One

“That’s my kid brother!” I said.

After I had heard the last part of the bulletin about Lee’s arrest for the murder of Dallas police officer J. D. Tippit, I asked the receptionist: “What station is that?” I was thinking that I might call the station manager or the announcer to ask for verification of the fragment of news I had heard and to request more details. Already there was some guarded speculation about a possible connection between the murder of Tippit and the death of Kennedy.

One of our salesmen had been listening closely to the series of news reports. He was leaning against the wall, about fifteen feet from me. He overheard my question to the receptionist, and seemed to guess immediately what I had in mind.

We had known each other a long time. He looked straight into my eyes and said: “Bob, let’s not hope.” And then he added this firmly, “This is true.”

I went into my office to call my wife, Vada. I asked her if she had been listening to the news, and she said no. She had been keeping the house quiet because the children were taking their naps.

I told her what I had heard on the receptionist’s radio, and said I would be coming home right away. But before I could leave the office, the telephone rang. The call was from the Acme credit manager in Fort Worth.

“Bob, brace yourself,” he said. “Your brother has been arrested.”

“Yes, I’ve heard,” I said.

The credit manager had telephoned because of a call he had received from my mother. She and I had been out of touch for some time, and she thought I was still working at an Acme plant in Arkansas. Mother had left her telephone number with

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the credit manager and had asked him to get word to me to call her.

I made the call to Mother, and she asked me to meet her at the Hotel Adolphus in Dallas later that evening. Then I drove home.

Vada was waiting for me by the door. Our children, Robert and Cathy, had just awakened from their naps, and we talked quietly to avoid upsetting them. Vada's parents live on an isolated farm about forty-five minutes by car from our house in Denton, and I suggested that she take the children with her to the farm. I would drive over to Dallas to see what I could do to help Lee, I said.

At first Vada argued that she should come to Dallas with me. But I convinced her that the children would need her, particularly during the next few days, and she telephoned her parents and asked them to come to pick her up. I did not tell her that I was worried about possible reprisals against anyone related to Lee. The farm seemed to offer Vada and the children safety from anyone who might be seeking vengeance.

I dressed and telephoned the company office in Forth Worth to discuss my plans. I spoke to the vice-president in charge of marketing, who had been at the meeting in Denton, and he told me to do whatever I felt I should do. He also told me that an FBI agent had come by the headquarters offices looking for me and had requested that I get in touch with them. I called the FBI office in Forth Worth and told an agent there of my decision to go on to Dallas. He asked that I report to the Bureau's Dallas office as soon as I reached Dallas, and I agreed that I would.

As I sped along the expressway to Dallas, I noticed a car following me. I was going at least 70 miles an hour, but even after I speeded up, the other car was gaining on me.

I had no idea who might be in it. Had the FBI agent I talked to decided to have me trailed? Or had someone recognized me as Lee Harvey Oswald's brother?

The other car actually caught up with me and pulled up beside me before I recognized the driver and the man who was with him. One was a plant manager for the Acme Brick Company, and the other was the company's Texas division manager. They motioned to me, and we both pulled over to the side of the expressway.

The two men told me that they had received a call from Acme headquarters in Fort Worth. Someone there had asked these two executives to find me and offer me any help I needed. The two men told me they were ready to accompany me to Dallas if I felt they could be of any assistance.

For a few seconds, I could not answer. My eyes were damp as I thanked them and told them I thought this was something I had to face by myself.

After we had talked a minute or two, one of the men asked me, "You got any money with you? You don't know how long you're going to be."

I guess I shook my head. I really didn't know how much money I had.

"Where's your billfold?" he asked.

I pulled it out and discovered that I had about twenty dollars in it.

He reached for it and said, "Here, you take this with you." He put about sixty or seventy dollars in the billfold without waiting for my reaction, and then handed the billfold back to me.

One of the men found some paper and wrote down their telephone numbers, and each of them told me where he would be that night in case I needed to reach him. Then they turned and headed back toward Denton.

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I don't know whether those men realized how much their wild ride out the expressway that afternoon meant to me. I know how strong a revulsion people feel toward any assassin, and I had seen how shocked even Kennedy's critics were by his death. At that moment all the news reports indicated that my brother was the man who had probably killed the President. But in those first hours I had seen no sign of hostility toward me in the faces of anyone I had talked to, and the people I knew either well or casually were treating me with unusual consideration and compassion.

Partly because of their friendly gesture, I made up my mind during my ride into Dallas to do whatever I could to help solve the mystery of just what had happened in Dealey Plaza at 12:30 that day. If Lee were innocent, of course, I would do everything I could to free him. If he were guilty, I would try to discover why he had fired those shots.

I had the address of the FBI office in Dallas, but I was not familiar with the city and I wasted about half an hour by first going to the wrong end of town.

After I located the Federal Building and reached the right floor, I noticed a sign beside the door of the FBI office: **AFTER 5 O'CLOCK RING THE NIGHT BELL**. I did, and saw a door farther down the hall open. A man came out of that door and said, "Yes?"

There were a number of people around, and I assumed that most of them were reporters. I didn't want to yell out my name, so I walked down the hall at a normal pace until I reached the place where the man was standing, and then quietly introduced myself.

"I believe someone here may be expecting me," I said.

He asked me to wait a moment for the agent who was sup-

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posed to interview me. When the other agent arrived, I asked where I could find a men's room.

"Downstairs," one of the agents said, and then told me he'd come with me. I felt that I could find the men's room without any help, but I didn't say anything. I realized that I was going to have a watchdog with me for a while.

When we came back upstairs, we entered the FBI offices and the agent who had accompanied me downstairs took me into a small room off to one side. The only light was provided by a single desk lamp which did not penetrate far into the shadows. I thought it odd that the other agent did not join us, since I assumed he might be needed later as a witness to the questioning. Then I wondered whether the room had been left in semi-darkness deliberately, and whether another agent or two might be concealed in the shadows. After a few seconds my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, and then I saw that we were alone.

At first I was somewhat tense. The agent told me that I did not have to answer any questions until I had had a chance to consult my attorney.

"I don't need an attorney," I told him. "You can ask me anything you want to, and I will try to answer it if I can."

After that, the agent seemed a little more relaxed.

"Is your brother's name Lee Harvey Oswald or Harvey Lee Oswald?" he asked. "We have it here as Harvey Lee."

"No," I said, "it's Lee Harvey Oswald."

"When did you last see him?"

"About a year ago," I said.

"Have you ever heard Lee express any hostility toward the President?"

"No, I haven't."

"We have a report that your brother was angry at Governor

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Connally because of some trouble over his discharge when Connally was Secretary of the Navy."

I told the agent that I had never heard Lee express any hostility toward Connally. I knew that Lee had addressed a letter to Connally protesting the reclassification of his discharge after his defection to Russia. But then Lee had received a letter informing him that Connally was no longer Secretary of the Navy, and had read that answer in my presence. He had said nothing at all to me that day that indicated he held Connally personally responsible for his dishonorable discharge from the Marines.

Actually, I felt, if Lee had any hostile feeling toward Connally, this would have been apparent in the weeks after his return from Russia in 1962, when the news about the action on his discharge was fresh, and not now, more than seventeen months later.

The agent asked me what I knew about Lee's membership in the Fair Play for Cuba committee and his recent trip to Mexico. Nothing at all, I told him, and reminded him that Lee and I had been completely out of touch for eight months and that I had last seen him the previous November.

I was interrogated for almost two hours. By that time the agent seemed to be running out of questions, and I asked if I could see Lee. The agent said the FBI had no jurisdiction over Lee, but I could make my request to "Will Fritz of Homicide."

I drove over to the Dallas jail. I noticed television trucks and equipment in front of the building and heavy television cables strung along the steps leading up to the first floor. I expected to see dozens or even hundreds of reporters and photographers as soon as I opened the door, but was surprised to find the first floor of the building absolutely deserted. The cables I had noticed snaked up the stairs to one of the floors above.

Since there was no one there to tell me where I would find

Will Fritz, I looked around for a building directory. I found it, and ran my eyes down the listing until I saw the words "Homicide Division."

Either I misread the directory listing or pushed the wrong button. When I stepped off the elevator, I realized immediately that I was not on the floor where a major investigation was being conducted. Everything was too quiet—almost serene. From the spot where I was standing I could see only one police officer—a gray-haired man, probably in his fifties, very distinguished and dignified-looking. He was in a glassed-in office some distance from the elevator, and was sitting there quietly eating a light supper from a paper bag.

He nodded politely when I approached.

"Could you tell me where I could find the officer in charge of the homicide division?" I asked. And then I added: "I'm Robert Oswald, Lee Oswald's brother."

The officer's attitude changed immediately. He jumped up, dropping his sandwich, and stammered a few words. Then he regained control and said, "Let me call Captain Fritz."

He tried to put a call through, but all the telephone lines seemed to be tied up.

"I'll take you down there," he said.

"Fine," I said.

We walked together back to the elevator and then he pushed the button. While we were waiting for the elevator to reach the floor, I put my hand in my back pocket to bring out my handkerchief. As soon as he saw my hand move in that direction, he wheeled around to face me directly, and I saw him brace himself. I understood exactly what he had in mind. He thought that I was reaching for a pistol.

I stopped dead still for a second or two, then moved my hand much more slowly. When I brought out my handkerchief, the officer relaxed.

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In those few seconds I had learned just how tense the situation was in Dallas.

Downstairs the hallway was filled wall to wall with reporters. I didn't see how people crammed into that narrow space could breathe.

The captain who had brought me down pushed his way through the mob and I followed. No one paid any attention to either of us.

"Where's Captain Fritz?" the officer kept asking, and someone pointed toward the end of the crowded hall. We squeezed our way through all the reporters and photographers and after a few minutes we reached Jesse Curry, the Dallas police chief, and Captain Fritz.

Fritz gave me a very cold look after the captain whispered my name.

"I'm tied up right now, but I do want to talk with you later," Fritz told me. Then he added: "I think your mother is still here. Captain, would you take him down to where Mrs. Oswald is waiting?" He nodded toward the opposite end of the hall.

That's the last time I saw Captain Fritz. He never did get around to talking to me.

We managed to squeeze back along the hallway and then pushed our way into the room where Mother was sitting. As I walked in, she got up and walked a couple of steps toward me.

"Robert, I see you found me," she said.

Two men who seemed to be in charge stepped forward.

"Brown with the FBI," one of them said, and then nodded toward the other one, saying, "And this is also Brown with the FBI."

The men looked and talked alike, and for a long time I thought the two Browns were brothers. They weren't related,

but both were typical of the FBI men I met in the period after the assassination. They had not a flicker of interest in me as an individual, or in Mother, or in Marina, or in anyone else they were questioning. They had a particular way of approaching anyone involved in any way in an investigation, and they did not consider adapting themselves to the people they were dealing with or to the situation.

Mother interrupted them shortly after their introductory remarks to say that she would like to talk to me, and one of the Browns found an empty office for us. As soon as we walked through the door, my mother leaned toward me and whispered, "This room is bugged. Be careful what you say."

Her remark annoyed me, but it didn't surprise me. All her life I had heard my mother talking about conspiracies, hidden motives, and malicious actions of other people, and I had long since learned to discount much of what she said.

"Listen," I said, not bothering to whisper, "I don't care whether the room is bugged or not. I'd be perfectly willing to say anything I've got to say right there in the doorway. If you know anything at all about what happened, I want to know it right now. I don't want to hear any whys, ifs, or wheresores."

My words didn't seem to register. Mother is able to close out anything she doesn't want to hear, as I learned by the time I was four years old.

She began talking very rapidly, apparently forgetting her own caution to me about the room being bugged. She seemed certain that Lee had been carrying out some official orders in whatever he had done. Since his defection to Russia four years before, Mother had been firmly convinced that he was a secret agent for the U. S. Government, recruited by the CIA or some other agency while he was still in the Marine Corps, and given mysterious and probably dangerous assignments.

I realized that she had received the news of Lee's arrest

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without any emotional strain at all. Within those few minutes, it seemed to me that Mother felt that now at last she was about to get the kind of attention she had sought all her life. She had an extraordinary idea of her ability and her importance. For many years she had been treated as just another woman of some minor business skill whose usefulness as an employee was limited because of her rather quarrelsome nature, and few people were even aware of her existence. But she seemed to recognize immediately that she would never again be treated as an ordinary, obscure, unimportant woman.

I myself was beginning to feel numb after the deep shock caused by that first radio bulletin about Lee. But I was also angry as I saw what was happening at the Dallas police station. It seemed to me that the police, who should be conducting a careful investigation to discover just what had happened and how deeply Lee might be involved, had instead surrendered to the mob of reporters, photographers and television cameramen. I knew that these men from the newspapers, magazines and television networks were workingmen, just as I was, and I could not blame them for carrying out their assignments. But I could and did blame the Dallas police department for its failure to retain any control over the situation.

The most casual remark by any of the investigators or police officers was broadcast to the world immediately, without any effort being made to determine whether it was somebody's wild speculation, a theory that deserved further investigation, or a fact supported by reliable evidence.

I felt that the entire investigation had gotten out of hand, and that a kind of hysteria had taken over in what should be a calm search for the truth.

When I first saw Marina that evening, she seemed completely bewildered. She was carrying the new baby, and I was surprised

because Lee had not told me that they were expecting another child.

I nodded to Marina, but before we had a chance to greet each other, a tall, slender, dark-haired woman thrust herself forward.

"I'm Ruth Paine," she said. "I'm a friend of Marina and Lee. I'm here because I speak Russian, and I'm interpreting for Marina."

I felt that she was stimulated by the drama of the moment and her rapid comments to everyone who would listen struck me as almost boastful: "I've had them over at my house," she would say to anyone who did not seem to recognize how close she had been to the center of the tragedy.

As I half listened to her, I saw a tall, slender, dark-haired man emerge from one of the nearby cubicles. I had noticed him when we first came in. He had been sitting in front of one of the desks, apparently being questioned by one of the Dallas detectives or an FBI man.

We were introduced by Ruth.

My first impression of Michael Paine was unfavorable. His handshake was weak, and his eyes were cold, unfeeling, almost expressionless. I felt that he was not looking at me but was staring straight through me.

Ruth invited Mother, Marina and the children to come back to Irving with her, and I must have said something about our not wanting to inconvenience her and Michael. She told me immediately that she and Michael were not living together, and then added: "It's a long story." Michael more or less faded away then, and sixteen days would pass before my next—and final—meeting with him.

As Mother, Marina and the children left the room, I suddenly realized that it might be difficult for them to get through the mob of newspapermen. I started out after them, but when

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I reached the door I saw that they were being escorted safely through the crowd of sixty or seventy reporters and photographers.

Most of the reporters were following Mother and Marina, but one lone reporter walked over to me.

"Let's see, now," he said, "you're his brother, aren't you? I understand you're living in Denton. Do you go to school there?"

I just looked at him a few seconds and then asked, "Who do you think you're talking to?"

"I don't know," he said, and turned around and walked off.

I walked back into the large room which was divided into cubicles. A very cordial Dallas police officer, Lieutenant E. L. Cunningham, asked me if I would like to come into his office and sit down for a minute. As we talked, I relaxed a little for the first time since I had received the news of Lee's arrest.

Lieutenant Cunningham told me that he had reached the Texas Theatre just before Lee was arrested, and then described the scene to me very quietly. Cunningham said that Lee had a revolver with him at the time of his arrest and that he fought with the officers who surrounded him.

As they brought Lee out of the theater, a crowd had already gathered and some of the people were saying that Lee should be lynched or hanged.

Cunningham's calm account of the facts made me realize for the first time just how strong a circumstantial case they had against Lee for the shooting of Officer Tippit, and it seemed difficult to explain that murder unless it was a part of an attempt to escape arrest for the assassination of the President.

The lieutenant did not seem to be trying to grill me, and he didn't try to get me to agree that Lee was guilty. He was simply informing me, as Lee's brother, of the details of the arrest. He spoke with unusual warmth and sympathy, and when I criticize

the Dallas police force I try not to forget that along with its bad officers it also includes some men like Lieutenant Cunningham.

By this time I was very tired, and I had given up any hope of seeing Captain Fritz that night. I asked Lieutenant Cunningham where I might find a hotel room for the night, and he suggested the Statler-Hilton, which was just half a block from the Dallas jail.

As I started out the door, the lieutenant said: "I guess it's all right to let you go. You seem to be a regular guy who's just gotten dragged in on a big mess."

As I crossed the Statler-Hilton lobby about ten o'clock that night, the idea briefly crossed my mind that I might save myself some trouble and escape some curious people by using a false name when I checked in. But while I was walking those few steps over to the registration desk, I made up my mind. I wasn't going to hide.

The registration clerk gave me a card to fill out, and I printed my name, Robert L. Oswald, and gave my address in Denton. The clerk was either a talented actor or else the name Oswald meant nothing to him at all. He asked me how long I would be staying and I answered, "One night." Then he handed a key to the bellhop and said, "Room 1630 for Mr. Oswald."

I went up to the sixteenth floor and spent a little while there in the room. It was small and ugly, furnished with two drab chairs, an unattractive little table, and a rollaway bed which had been made up by unfolding a couch. I had always liked this hotel before, but I had never realized that it had rooms so cramped and depressing.

I was worn out, but I wasn't sleepy. I went downstairs to the hotel coffee shop and had a ham sandwich, which I ate without

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much interest, and then I walked five or six blocks to the place where I had parked my car. I had no clear idea in my mind of where I was going, but I felt that I could not sit still and could not sleep. I decided I would drive somewhere by myself, to think about what I had learned in those long hours since the cashier in Jay's Grill asked us if we had heard that the President had been shot.

I found myself heading west out of Dallas, on Highway 80. Usually I flip on the radio when I am driving by myself, but I didn't want to have another voice intruding, so I drove in silence.

I was almost convinced that Lee had shot Tippit, largely because of Cunningham's calm description to me of the scene at the Texas Theatre. But I could not yet accept the conclusion the various officials seemed to be reaching that he had also assassinated the President. At the same time, the Tippit murder seemed to make no sense at all unless there was some connection between it and the death of John Kennedy.

Some people were already speculating that the killing of the President was not an isolated act by one man but the result of a great conspiracy, perhaps involving some extremist political group of the right or the left or even members of the government.

If Lee's shooting of Tippit were part of a general plot against Kennedy, who else was involved? Was it possible that Marina had played some role in the plan? What about other friends of Lee's? These were the questions that ran through my mind as I drove along the familiar highway.

I had reached the west side of Fort Worth before I realized just how far I had driven. When I saw where I was, I turned around and started back to Dallas.

I returned to the Statler-Hilton and turned my car over to the parking attendant at the hotel garage, then crossed the

street to the Dallas police station. I hoped that I could talk briefly to Fritz.

I didn't see Fritz, but two FBI men took me into a small room and asked me a number of questions. They seemed to be going over exactly the same ground other FBI men had covered earlier that day. Even their voices sounded like the voices of the other agents I had talked to. Before the week was over, I developed the conviction that you could pick any ten FBI men and put them into a dark room with someone they were questioning, and the man being questioned would have the eerie feeling that one person with ten voices was speaking to him from different directions. In manner, intonation, the nature of the questions they asked, the way they phrased those questions and, most of all, general coldness, the FBI men I met seemed interchangeable. Almost none of them impressed me as an individual human being, because they did not approach me as a fellow human being.

After we had been talking for a while, one of the agents left the room for a few minutes. When he came back in, he said quietly to me, "Robert, you might as well know. Now they are charging your brother with the President's death."

I looked at my watch. It was just after midnight.

I had managed to keep full control of myself for eleven hours since I had first learned of what had happened in Dealey Plaza. But as I walked the short distance from the police station to the Statler-Hilton, my body suddenly began to shake all over. The feelings I have learned to hide since I was three or four years old were too strong now to conceal. But I rarely let anyone else see how I feel in times of shock, and I brought my body back under control before I reached the hotel.

I finally went to bed. But I did not go to sleep. I spent the rest of that long night trying to unravel the mystery of my brother's life.

Part Two: *The Years Before*



## *Chapter Two*

THE DAY Lee was born, October 18, 1939, John and I were hoping for a baby brother. "If it's a girl," John said, "we'll throw it out the hospital window."

John Edward Pic was my half brother, and was named for Mother's first husband, Edward John Pic, with the first and middle names reversed. Mother had been separated from Mr. Pic even before John was born, so he never really knew his father. John had been a lot closer to my father, Robert Edward Lee Oswald. When I was little, I guess I just assumed that my father was John's father, too.

My chief recollection of my father is a trivial one. Sometimes he would put a hand into his back pocket, with three fingers tucked in and the thumb and little finger out. Then he'd say to John and me, "Grab ahold!" We would hold on and he'd swing us around.

At the time Lee was born, I had not yet accepted the idea that I would never see my father again. He had died of a heart attack just two months earlier.

While our mother was in the Old French Hospital on Orleans Avenue where Lee was born, John and I were staying with Mrs. Charles Murret, our mother's sister. Our house was not far away, on Alvar Street. We had been to Aunt Lillian's often and enjoyed visiting her and her five children. Two of

our cousins were almost exactly our ages and we often played together.

When Mother brought the baby home from the hospital, she told us his name was Lee Harvey. He was named for my father and our grandmother, whose maiden name was Harvey.

We went back to our own house, but we didn't stay there long. Now that Dad was dead, Mother had to support the family, so she rented our house and we moved into a smaller one on Congress Street.

Right after that, John and I were sent to a Catholic boarding school, the Infant Jesus College in Algiers, across the river from New Orleans. We hated it. The nuns were terribly strict and we were afraid of them. We saw boys who broke the rules beaten with a broomstick. The whole place was gloomy and cold and we felt like outsiders because we were Lutheran. I guess we must have told Mother that we hated it, because she took us home again after a few months.

By this time she had sold our house on Alvar Street and used the profit to buy a smaller house at 1010 Bartholomew Street, where she opened a shop in the front room, called Oswald's Notion Shop. She sold candy, needles, thread, ribbon and other sewing materials. She hoped that the shop would make it possible for her to stay at home with us and still make a living, but she didn't make enough money to pay our bills. She then sold that little house for enough money to keep us going for a while.

John and I were placed in the Bethlehem Children's Home, a home for orphans or children with just one parent. Mother asked the home to accept Lee, too, but he was too young. He was only two and the minimum age was three.

Mother must have felt pretty desperate, knowing she had to go to work and not knowing how she could do it and still look after the baby. She found a job as a switchboard operator and

moved into an apartment at 831 Pauline Street. Aunt Lillian, though she had five children of her own, offered to take care of Lee. Later, she remembered Lee as "a beautiful child . . . an adorable child," but he was not easy to care for, especially after he started running away at night.

"He could slip out of the house like nobody's business," Aunt Lillian said. "You could have everything locked up in the house . . . and we had gates up and everything, but he would still get out."

Mother decided he would be better off in his own home, even if she had to hire somebody to take care of him while she was at work. She advertised in a newspaper and a couple applied for the job. She wasn't able to pay them much—just fifteen dollars a month—but they could live in the house rent free.

The couple stayed for two months. Mother came home from work one day and found Lee crying and saw that he had big red welts on his legs. A neighbor told her that the hired babysitters had often mistreated Lee, whipping him to keep him quiet. She fired the couple on the spot. They told her that Lee was a "bad, unmanageable child," but Mother said a two-year-old baby couldn't be that bad. Aunt Lillian remembered later that Mother was terribly upset. She knew she had to work to support her children, but she said she'd rather quit her job than leave Lee with strangers.

Soon after she left her job, Mother moved back to the old neighborhood, near Aunt Lillian's house. Aunt Lillian was good-natured and always willing to help out, so she took care of Lee during the day while Mother worked. At night, when Mother came home, Lee came home to be with her.

Mother and Aunt Lillian quarreled from time to time, and sometimes Mother threatened never to speak to her sister again. But they always made up. Aunt Lillian said that their

relationship had always been like than, even when they were little girls. "Marguerite's easy to get along with," she used to say, "as long as she gets her own way."

We boys later learned what she meant. While John and I were in the Bethlehem Home, seeing Mother only on weekends and holidays, we didn't see many of her outbursts, but later on we saw plenty of them. I guess Lee learned at a very early age that Mother was *not* easy to get along with when she didn't get her own way.

In October, 1942, just after Lee's third birthday, Mother applied again to have him admitted to the Bethlehem Home. John and I went home to spend the Christmas holiday with Mother and Lee, and when we returned to the home, Lee went with us.

When we had first gone to live at the home, John had looked after me. He was then ten and I was seven. If the bigger boys picked on me, I knew I could count on John to help me out. Now I had somebody to look after. If anybody picked on Lee, he knew he could come to me. If I couldn't handle the situation, we would call on John, but I think Lee felt closer to me. While we were in the orphanage, Lee and I really began to feel like brothers.

Later in our lives, Lee and I were always closer than Lee and John—or Lee and Mother. He didn't talk much, but when he had something he wanted to discuss with someone, he would discuss it with me.

My memories of the Bethlehem Home are mostly pleasant ones. There was a cheerful atmosphere, far less rigid than the strict Catholic orphanage in Algiers. I didn't like one of the rules—that we had to eat everything on our plates at mealtimes—but I don't remember that the food was especially bad. It was always more than I wanted, so I used to hide some of mine in a paper napkin and throw it away.

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The boys slept in one wing of the big dormitory building and the girls in the other. I remember the rows of cots in the big open rooms. There must have been about seventy-five to a hundred children, none older than twelve or thirteen.

We didn't wear uniforms. Mother provided our clothes and we were allowed to decide what we would wear each day. There was a big dresser drawer full of socks, all sizes, where we fished around in the mornings to find a pair to fit us. I would always look for the smallest pair for Lee.

During the whole time that Lee spent in the Bethlehem Home, a little more than a year, I don't remember that he ever talked about missing his mother. Up to that time, he had always stayed with baby-sitters or housekeepers or aunts and uncles and was accustomed to being away from Mother. He still saw her, at least once a week, and I think he was glad to be with his brothers and the other children.

I remember Lee as a happy baby and a happy little boy—normal and healthy, not too quiet but not overly rambunctious. He seemed to enjoy everything around him and always asked a lot of questions—"What makes this work?"—"How does this go?"

While the three of us were in the Bethlehem Home, Mother had a good job as manager of the Princess Hosiery Shop on Canal Street. Once a week in the summertime, I think it was every Wednesday, the three of us used to ride the streetcar over to Canal Street and visit Mother at the shop. She would have lunch with us and then we'd go to a movie. On weekends she came to the home to visit us.

One weekend she brought a friend with her, a tall, white-haired man with glasses and a Yankee accent. He was good-natured and friendly and seemed to know how to talk to boys. We liked him because he seemed to like us.

This was Edwin A. Ekdahl, an electrical engineer from

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Boston who was working for Texas Electrical Service in New Orleans. He and Mother had been seeing each other for several months and he had asked her to marry him.

Mother was then thirty-seven years old but looked younger. She was still slender and remarkably pretty and vivacious. Her dark hair had not yet begun to turn gray, and she wore it long. It framed her face, setting off her vivid blue eyes. Lee's eyes were like hers—clear and blue with dark lashes.

Early in 1944, Mother came to take Lee out of the orphanage. Mr. Ekdahl had been transferred to Dallas and had asked her to go with him. John and I stayed at the Bethlehem Home to finish out the school year, but in June we went to Dallas, to our new home on Victor Street.

Mr. Ekdahl traveled a lot, but came home on weekends. We looked forward to those weekends. It was a treat for us to have a stepfather who paid attention to us, talked with us, took us out for ice cream and made every little excursion a special event. He never made us feel that he was just doing a duty to his stepchildren, but really seemed interested in what we did and said. He asked us to call him "Ed," making us feel very grown-up when we did.

All of us liked Mr. Ekdahl and got along well with him, but I think Lee loved him most of all. He was the first father Lee had ever known. John and I could remember having a father to play with us when we were little, swinging us around the yard and picking us up when we fell, but Lee had never known a normal family life.

Mother was easier to please, too, when he was around. All of us enjoyed that summer together, but it couldn't last forever. In September, 1945, the summer ended and John and I were sent to military school at Port Gibson, Mississippi.

For the next three years, the Chamberlain-Hunt Military Academy was our home. During those years, I saw Lee only

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during school vacations and on a few occasions when he and Mother were traveling with Mr. Ekdahl and dropped in for a visit at the school.

Chamberlain-Hunt was a small school, about 110 boys in all, so we received a lot of individual attention. In addition to arithmetic, English and history, we had military training and field drills. The Commandant, Captain Herbert D. Farrell, was an ex-Marine who taught us math as well as military science. When I look back to those years, I realize how much I was influenced by Captain Farrell. Without realizing it, I had adopted him as a father substitute and wanted to copy what he did. Maybe John felt the same way. Both of us heard him talk a lot about the Marines. I probably took it for granted while I was at the Academy that I would eventually join the Marine Corps.

We enjoyed weekends at the school. There were private lakes for fishing and the woods around Port Gibson were full of small game—foxes, birds, rabbits and squirrels. In those woods my hunting instinct came alive, and it has stayed with me until this day. I think I communicated some of my enthusiasm to Lee. A few years later he learned to hunt and shoot when he followed John and me into the woods.

While John and I were getting used to our first year at Chamberlain-Hunt, Lee was seeing a great deal of the country. Mr. Ekdahl spent a lot of time on the road and he took Mother and Lee with him on almost all of his trips, at first. I remember letters Mother wrote us from Boston and a snapshot of Lee with Mother, mailed from Arizona.

Sometime in the fall of 1945 the family settled in Benbrook, Texas, a suburb of Fort Worth, and on October 31, just after his sixth birthday, Lee entered the first grade in the Benbrook Elementary School.

The first time John and I came home from military school

for a visit we brought our wooden practice rifles. They didn't fire, but we were taught how to hold them. At home we taught Lee how to hold a rifle and how to follow commands. He had a fine time, right-facing and left-facing and marching around with my rifle.

Lee looked up to both of us and used to tag along after us everywhere we went, when we'd let him. Later, when we learned to shoot, we passed along our knowledge to Lee. John could always outshoot me on targets, but I liked to get out in the fields and hunt. I could keep up with John in the field, and even do a little better. Lee learned from both of us. He did pretty well on targets—just a notch or two below me—but in the fields was awkward.

On our first visit to Benbrook, John and I were impressed with the house Mr. Ekdahl had rented for the family. It was the largest and most comfortable house we had ever lived in—a spacious, low house of native stone surrounded by some acreage. There was a creek about four or five hundred yards behind the house. Lee took me out there to show me where he had found a skunk a few days earlier. He said he hadn't known what a skunk was before, but he found out! We had a lot of fun that summer, wading and fishing in the creek. Lee liked for me to play Cowboys and Indians with him out there. I thought I was too old for that kind of play, but I found myself enjoying it with Lee.

The Ekdahl household seemed happy to me that summer, but I didn't know about the arguments and disagreements Mother and her new husband had when John and I weren't there. I didn't know then that Mother often nagged Mr. Ekdahl until he began to spend more and more time away from home. She left him several times, then went back.

I'm sure that Lee was far more upset by their conflicts than we were. After all, we were miles away and he was right there

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to hear the quarrels. Besides, I think Lee was a lot more sensitive than any of us realized at the time. He kept his feelings to himself and didn't show how much he worried over the danger of losing the only father he had ever known.

I remember one summer, the last summer before their divorce, when Mother and Mr. Ekdahl had been separated but were trying once more to make up. They drove up to the house together one evening and said they were going out. John, who was then fifteen, would be in charge of us for the evening. Lee was one happy kid! More than anything else, he wanted them to make up their differences and go back together.

Lee wanted a normal family life. So did I, but I think I had already accepted the fact that our family was not like other families. When I saw other children with their parents I recognized the difference—a distinct difference between our family life and theirs. When parents of the boys at Chamberlain-Hunt came to visit, I could see that their relationship with their sons was not at all like the relationship we had with our mother. Maybe because she had to worry about supporting us she never had time to enjoy us. Other parents, it seemed to me, enjoyed their children. I just know that we learned, very early, that we were a burden to her.

As long as Mother was married to Mr. Ekdahl, she didn't have to carry the burden alone and we all felt relieved. Lee, most of all. He was with her all the time. But in June, 1948, Mother and Mr. Ekdahl were divorced. John had to go to Fort Worth to testify against Mr. Ekdahl at the hearing. There was some talk about putting Lee on the stand, but as John remembered it:

“Lee said he wouldn't know right from wrong and truth from falsehood, so they excused him as a witness.”

The divorce was a blow to Lee. It meant the end of the only father-son relationship he would ever know.

After the divorce Mother took back my father's name. She still signs her name "Marguerite C. Oswald." She and Lee had already left Benbrook and were living in Fort Worth at 1505 Eighth Avenue. She hadn't had to work while she was Mrs. Edwin Ekdahl, but now she set out to find another job.

John and I were back at Chamberlain-Hunt, expecting to stay there all summer. Sometime in June, when most of the other boys had already left, I was helping to put away some old Springfield rifles one day when we had a surprise visit from Mother. Lee was with her.

Neither John nor I was prepared for the announcement Mother made—that we would have to pack up our things and go home with her. I suppose we might have expected it, but we didn't want to think about it. Both of us liked Chamberlain-Hunt, felt at home there and didn't want to leave. Mother explained that she simply couldn't afford to pay the tuition anymore.

We went back to Forth Worth where Mother had moved to a house at 3300 Willing Street, next to the railroad tracks. It was a long way down from the stone house in Benbrook—small, drab and closed-in. The train tracks were about sixty or seventy yards behind the house, so the furniture would rattle every time a train passed by. After the open fields and woods of Port Gibson, it seemed prisonlike to John and me. He said it meant we were "back down in the lower class." He hated it.

We didn't stay on Willing Street very long. Soon after John and I came home, Mother bought another house in Benbrook and we moved again. It was a small house with only one bedroom—not as impressive as the stone house we had before, but pleasant enough. John and I shared a screened-in porch where we slept on studio couches, while Mother and Lee shared the bedroom.

In recent years I have read statements by psychiatrists and

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other experts who say that Lee may have suffered psychological damage because he shared a bed with his mother until he was nearly ten years old. (Some say eleven years old.) I can't make any expert judgment about that, but I do know that Lee shared a double bed with Mother in the Benbrook house and, later, when we moved into Fort Worth. When John left for the Coast Guard in January, 1950, a few months after Lee's tenth birthday, Lee moved into John's bed.

At the time, I didn't attach any particular importance to the sleeping arrangements. We were always short of space, and it seemed perfectly logical to me that John and I would share one bedroom and Mother and Lee the other. If this had a bad effect on Lee, I'm sure Mother didn't realize it. She was simply making use of all the space she had.

Before school opened that fall we moved again, back to Fort Worth where Mother had a job as a saleswoman at Leonard Brothers Department Store. The new house was at 7408 Ewing Street, a two-bedroom house with asbestos siding, a red roof, a small porch in front and an attached garage. It was within walking distance of the elementary school for Lee. John and I rode the school bus.

Lee entered the third grade at Arlington Heights Elementary School that September. This was just a few weeks before his ninth birthday, and he had already attended four different schools. After he entered Benbrook Elementary School in 1945, Mother moved briefly to Covington, Louisiana, where he was in the first grade until early 1947. Then they moved back to Fort Worth where he repeated the first grade at Clayton School. He finished that year with all A's and B's. He started the second grade at Clayton, but the following spring, after the divorce, he was transferred to Clark Elementary School where he completed the second grade, again with all A's and B's. Now he was about to begin a new grade in a new school.

I was fourteen and in the ninth grade at W. C. Stripling Junior High School. That year I had a part-time job after school at a grocery store near the house. John was sixteen and would have been a junior in high school, but Mother said she needed his financial help, so he had to quit school and help support the family. He went to work in the shoe department of Everybody's Department Store at \$25 a week. Out of this, he gave \$15 to Mother for the family. I also contributed most of what I made, holding out enough for school expenses.

By this time, or even earlier, I had become keenly aware that Mother felt the world owed her a living. It wasn't laziness—she always had plenty of energy—it was just the responsibility for all of us that was too much for her. She felt that her life was harder than the lives of most people. All of us could feel that she wanted to be free of the responsibility—wanted to let someone else face it. Even when we were small, I don't think she ever considered putting us up for adoption, but she wanted to give away as much of the responsibility for us as she could. By the time we were teen-agers, she thought we should take over some of her burden.

John was so resentful of Mother that he simply ignored her as much as he could. He resented having to leave Chamberlain-Hunt and he resented not being able to finish high school. Mother wanted him to join the Marine Corps Reserve, to bring in a little extra income, but John said he would rather be in the Coast Guard if he joined the service. Besides, he was still too young. But Mother signed an affidavit saying that he was born on January 17, 1931, a year earlier than his actual birth date, and he joined the Marine Corps Reserve in October, 1948.

Mother made it clear to us that she felt we should start supporting ourselves as soon as we were old enough. She realized that a certain amount of education was necessary for us, but

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the question of college, for any of us, never came up. Mother had managed to get along on a ninth-grade education. She assumed that we could do as well, or better, whether or not we had high school diplomas. She told John he had to go to work, but he made up his mind to oppose her.

The following January, John went back to school on his own. He didn't even ask Mother. He just enrolled at Arlington Heights High School as a junior. He made all his own arrangements and signed his own report cards. Of course, he couldn't work full time and still go to school, but he managed to get a part-time job at Burt's Shoe Store, working afternoons and Saturdays. He made almost as much money that way as he had made at the department store. He was determined to graduate—and he almost made it.

That summer, 1949, John went to summer school to take extra credit courses, hoping to receive his diploma at midterm. That fall, when I entered the tenth grade at Arlington Heights, my brother was within a few months of graduation.

Lee was in the fourth grade at the brand-new Ridglea West Elementary School, just built in our neighborhood. Here he completed the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, his longest stay in any single school.

Lee used to get home from school earlier than we did in the afternoons, and spent a lot of time alone, but he didn't seem to mind. He liked to read and he had grown accustomed to shifting for himself. Mother had always told him to come straight home after school and I think he obeyed her.

John and I had learned to stay out of Mother's way as much as possible. We discovered that we didn't really know her very well, and she didn't know us. We had been away from her for many years and we had become accustomed to being disciplined by men—first at the orphanage and then at the military school. We found her kind of discipline hard to take. If we

did something she didn't like, it made no difference whether it was trivial or serious, she made a big fuss over it, telling us how wrong we were, or else she gave us the silent treatment and wouldn't talk at all.

I remember one time, when I was about sixteen, a friend of mine bought some Danish cigarettes—just because they were unusual—and gave me two or three to try. I had them in my pocket when I came home from school that day, so I pulled them out and laid them on the table with my books. There was no reason to hide them—Mother knew that I smoked from time to time—but when she saw those foreign cigarettes she let out such a shriek, you'd think I had robbed a bank.

"Now you're on dope," she accused. "I'm going to take those cigarettes to the police and have them analyzed. I'll find out what's in them! You can't get away with this in my house!"

"All right," I agreed. "Take them to the police. They're just cigarettes."

So Mother took the cigarettes, and that was the last I heard about them. By that time, I had learned to deal with Mother's threats by ignoring them. I'd tell her to go ahead and do whatever it was she was threatening to do. Most of the time it was something so farfetched that I knew she would never do it. She was always threatening to call the police.

Another time, when I wanted to go to a movie with some friends, Mother didn't want me to go. I couldn't see any reason why I shouldn't go, and she didn't give me one, so I went anyway. "If you're going to go gallivanting all over the country," she said—the movie was less than a mile away—"don't expect to get in the house when you come home." So she locked me out. When I came home that night, I just sat on the front porch until she came and opened the door.

John and I could shrug off Mother's tirades, but Lee used to get upset. He would sulk and pout, but he never talked back.

I could tell when he was upset because he would go off by himself and play with the dog or watch television. Sometimes he brooded for hours and went to bed still sulking. But he always recovered by the next morning.

I realize now that John and I had an important advantage over Lee when it came to handling Mother. In the orphanages and in the military school we had developed independence very early. We had to. In a place where there are so many children, nobody has time to make every decision for each child all the time. We had to learn to make up our own minds —to size up a given situation, decide what we were going to do about it, then do it. Sometimes we were wrong, but we knew that our mistakes were our own, not somebody else's.

It was different for Lee. He had Mother telling him what to do a lot longer than we did. She made his decisions for him as long as she was with him. During the brief period when he was with us in the Bethlehem Home, he looked to John and me to tell him what to do, then he was back under Mother's wing before he was five.

Mother always protected Lee from criticism by anybody else, maybe because he was the youngest. If ever the three of us had a dispute among ourselves, she blamed John and me. Sometimes we thought she was unfair, but it didn't really bother us. We simply accepted the fact that she was temperamental. And we knew we would be leaving home as soon as we could, and would no longer have to put up with her.

January 17, 1950, was John's eighteenth birthday and his high school graduation was just eleven days away. On the 25th, just three days before graduation, he enlisted in the Coast Guard and left for Cape May, New Jersey. We didn't see him again until October, when he came home on leave for the last time.

After John left, Lee moved into his bed and shared a room

with me. He seemed happy to have a bed of his own, and I think it made him feel grown-up to take John's place as my roommate. We spent more time together, talked to each other more, and I began to feel closer to my little brother.

Lee followed me around more than ever when I was at home. After school he wanted to go where I went, do what I did, read what I read. He had always liked to read a lot, and he didn't want to confine himself to the books he was supposed to read in the fourth grade. He seemed to feel he should read things that were more advanced, to keep up with me.

He became interested in the stamp collection that John had given me when he went into the Coast Guard. John had sent away for some unusual stamps and special sets. Sometimes in the evenings I would sit down to sort them out and put a few into the album. Lee would ask questions about the stamps and offer to help me. Eventually, when I left home, I gave the collection to Lee.

Now that I look back, I think Lee treasured the hand-me-downs from his brothers. Not long ago I came across a book of fairy tales that belonged to me when I was five or six years old. I had written my name inside the front cover. Under my name, in a round, childish scrawl, he had written *Lee Oswald*.

He liked fairy tales, as all of us did when we were small. One of his favorite radio programs was *Let's Pretend*, a Saturday morning show that dramatized popular fairy tales. I used to listen to it, too, but of course I was older and didn't watch the clock, as Lee did, waiting for the show to begin. After it was over—after I had already started thinking about something else—Lee would still be talking about the story, pretending to be one of the characters. Even then he seemed to prefer a fantasy world to the drab reality around him.

Now it seems clear to me that Lee's love of fantasy stayed with him, even after childhood. Throughout his life, it took

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him longer than other boys to move from the imaginary world to the real world. All of us had our dreams and fantasies, but Lee's always lingered a little longer.

The center of Lee's fantasy world shifted from radio to television when Mother bought a television set in 1948. When it was new, all of us spent far too much time watching variety shows, dramas and old movies. Lee, particularly, was fascinated. One of his favorite programs was *I Led Three Lives*, the story of Herbert Philbrick, the FBI informant who posed as a Communist spy. In the early 1950's, Lee watched that show every week without fail. When I left home to join the Marines, he was still watching the reruns.

Lee's imagination and love of intrigue was a lot like Mother's. She always had a wild imagination and I think it influenced Lee's view of the world. Even now, she still sees a spy behind every door and tree.

I remember how surprised I was the first few times I saw what her imagination could do to simple, ordinary events. One chilly Saturday night I went to a football game between Texas A. and M. and Texas Christian in Fort Worth. After the game, a friend of mine who was a student at A. and M. invited me to a party in a small ballroom of the old Blackstone Hotel. During the evening, I happened to be passing a table where the girls had left their coats when I saw one of the waiters going through the women's purses.

Almost as soon as I saw him, he saw me, and broke away and ran. I found my friend and we told the hotel manager, who telephoned the police. Later that evening, we heard that the waiter had been arrested.

The next morning, my friend and I were called down to the police station to identify the man. Just after we started talking to the captain, the telephone rang. It was Mother, calling me.

"Don't you dare!" she shouted at me. "Don't you dare identify that man!"

"But, Mother, I saw him."

"I don't care what you saw! He'll get out of jail and he'll kill us. He has friends. They'll come here and they'll kill us!"

I said, "For Pete's sake, Mom!" and hung up. We identified the man and that was the last we heard about it.

Mother always detected hidden motives in people's behavior and suspected people of carrying on secret activities. She loved mystery, and I saw this trait reflected in Lee—just as he reflected her feeling that the world should recognize her as somebody special and important.

She was a capable woman—and still is. But she wasn't satisfied with just an ordinary job. Always she felt she deserved something better than what she had. And always she was obsessed with money.

From our earliest years, all of us were aware of that preoccupation. At least once in any ordinary day, the subject of money would be discussed. If John or Lee or I commented casually that we wished we could have something or do something, her immediate reaction was that we couldn't afford it, there wasn't enough money.

After John left home, I knew that I would have to do more to help Mother support the family. She was selling insurance that year, and doing very well, but it was a strain on her to keep up the payments on the house and provide our food and clothes.

In June, 1950, when I finished the tenth grade at Arlington Heights High School, I got a full-time job at an A&P supermarket, earning about forty dollars a week. In the fall I didn't go back to school. The store had given me a raise and had promised me another. By the end of the year I was a checker, making sixty-five or seventy dollars a week.

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Lee was still at the Ridglea West School, in the fifth grade. Most of his grades were B's and his achievement tests showed high ability in reading. He was having no trouble in school that I can remember, except for a D in spelling. His IQ was recorded at 103.

After a year working full time, I began to understand the conflict John had felt after he had dropped out of school. When I saw my friends preparing for graduation, I knew I had to go back. In the fall of 1951, I did go back to Arlington Heights High School as a junior, while continuing to work afternoons and Saturdays at the A&P.

In July, 1952, three months after my eighteenth birthday, I enlisted in the Marines. Lee was full of questions. Where was I going? What would I be doing? Would I go overseas? I told him I wouldn't know where I was going until after boot camp. Soon after I left, Lee bought a copy of the *Marine Corps Handbook*. He said he was going to keep up with me, to learn everything I was learning. He was only twelve, but he planned to enlist in the Marines as soon as he was old enough.

He saw in the Marines an escape from the drabness of school, a chance to lead his own life, and an opportunity to impress the world. That was still far in the future, of course, and before that dream was shattered Lee faced a whole series of other disappointments.

## *Chapter Three*

THAT summer, a few weeks after I went to boot camp in San Diego, Mother and Lee piled their belongings into her 1948 Dodge and drove to New York. She had sold the house and resigned from her job, ready to start a new life in a new city.

New York had been chosen for several reasons. John was there, still in the Coast Guard, stationed on Ellis Island. Mother had not seen him for nearly two years, but she knew that he had married a New York girl, Margaret Dorothy Fuhrman, and that they were living in her mother's apartment at 325 East 92nd Street in Manhattan. Now they had an infant son, Mother's first grandchild, John Edward Pic, Jr., born May 14, 1952. Mother wanted to see her grandson and meet her daughter-in-law.

One steamy August day, Mother and Lee drove up to the Pics' upper east side apartment and opened a new chapter in Lee's life. Almost immediately after their arrival, the new chapter was off to an ominous start.

On their first day in New York, Mother came out of her room crying. She told Marge that Lee had slapped her when she asked him to look out the window to see if the car was all right. That slap, reported eleven years later by John in his testimony before the Warren Commission, has been cited by

various experts as an indication of the violence that was ready to explode in Lee's personality.

Perhaps it was a warning signal that his family should have recognized. If I had known about it at the time, I would have been surprised—because I had never seen Lee strike Mother—but I don't think I would have been alarmed by his behavior. Knowing how Mother could nag, I think I would have assumed that she goaded him into slapping her.

Marge, who had never met Mother before, was upset by the friction between her in-laws. She was already feeling uncomfortable about playing hostess. She was only eighteen and felt she had her hands full taking care of the new baby and the apartment. When Mother said nothing about limiting their visit, Marge began to be afraid her visitors had come to stay—indefinitely.

At first the reunion was pleasant for Lee and John. John took a few days off from work to show Lee and Mother the city. He took Lee for a ride on the Staten Island Ferry and watched him explore the Museum of Natural History. Lee seemed like any other excited kid while they were sight-seeing, John said, but after a few days he noticed a distinct change in his little brother's behavior. Lee was no longer the docile, easygoing kid he had been in Fort Worth. Before, he had always been under Mother's thumb, but now *he* seemed to be the boss.

Lee was nearly thirteen, an age when most boys rebel against their parents to some degree, but Lee's rebellion against Mother seemed total. He was often angry and slapped Mother more than once, John recalled. He had never done this when we were all together in Fort Worth. Certainly, he had never seen either John or me strike Mother, no matter how annoyed we were. We would simply walk away, and Lee would follow us. It may be that he had *felt* like slapping Mother before, but

we were a steady influence. How can we know? Whatever the explanation may be, by the time they came to New York, Lee had taken Mother's domineering behavior as long as he could. Now he seemed to be telling her by his actions that he wouldn't take any more.

The hostility between Mother and Lee disturbed John and Marge, but there was another strain as well—on John's budget. From a Coast Guardsman's pay, John was supporting five people, paying his own daily transportation to and from Ellis Island, and trying to provide a few treats for the visitors. For a man who was still too young to vote, this was a heavy load. The money disappeared so fast that he hardly had time to put it into his pocket. Mother had made no offer to help with household expenses, and when John casually mentioned this budget problem to her she blew up.

"We were not wanted . . . from the very beginning," she said later. "My daughter-in-law . . . asked what did we plan to do, as soon as we put our foot in the house. And I had made it plain to John Edward that I was going to have a place of my own, that we were just coming there to get located."

Even if Mother had made her intentions plain, John and Marge might still have wondered how long it was going to take Mother to "get located." She made no move to find an apartment or a job and began talking about enrolling Lee in the school there in the neighborhood.

Lee enjoyed playing uncle. Marge said he was very gentle with the baby and could be genuinely helpful around the house, but she was alarmed by his rudeness to Mother. She spoke to him about that one day and he gave her a sharp answer. After that, he treated Marge with the same contempt he showed Mother.

One afternoon John came home and found the household in an uproar. Marge said Lee had pulled a knife and threatened

her with it. He had been watching television, she said, and she had asked him to turn down the sound. He pulled out a pocket knife, opened the blade and moved toward her. She was frightened and moved away. Maybe she called for Mother. Anyway, when Mother came in and told Lee to put the knife away, he hit her.

Mother didn't think it was anything serious—"just a little argument." Lee had been whittling, she said, and had the knife in his hand. Perhaps Marge saw the knife and thought he was threatening her. It was just a misunderstanding.

John listened to both sides of the story. He believed his wife, but asked Lee to tell his version of what happened. Lee wouldn't talk to him.

Now he seemed to feel that everybody was against him. He began keeping more and more to himself, refusing to talk with anybody. John said, "I was never able to get to the kid again."

I knew nothing about Lee's alleged threat with the knife until a long time afterward. At the time it happened, I was still in California, about to transfer to the Marine base at Camp Pendleton for combat training. A year later, when I went to New York on leave, nobody in the family even mentioned the incident to me.

Almost everything I know about Lee's life in New York has been reconstructed from statements made by John, Marge, Mother and the various school and city officials who testified before the Warren Commission. Lee never mentioned his dispute with Marge to me. The next time I saw him was the following summer. By that time he had other things on his mind.

Soon after the dispute about the knife, Mother and Lee moved out of the Pics' apartment. Mother had taken a job as assistant manager of a dress shop and had found an apartment in the Bronx, at 1455 Sheridan Avenue. It was a basement apartment—one big room—and Lee hated it. He wanted a sepa-

## LEE—Part Two

rate room. As soon as Mother could find a larger apartment that she could afford, they moved again, to 825 East 179th Street. There, for the first time in his life, Lee had a room of his own.

In October, 1952, three or four weeks after Mother had enrolled him in a private Lutheran school, Lee was transferred to a public school in the Bronx, Junior High School No. 117. By the following January Lee had been absent for 47 out of the 64 school days. The school sent a truant officer and Lee was taken to Children's Court.

It was the first time Lee had ever been in serious trouble at school. In Fort Worth he had been a reasonably good student—better in some subjects than in others—and he had never been a truant. He had always spent a lot of time alone, but he had some friends at school. Here in New York he seemed to have no friends at all. The boys at J.H.S. 117 made fun of his Texas drawl and the way he dressed. It was too much for Lee to face, so he found a way to escape.

While Mother was at work Lee spent hours alone in the apartment, watching one television show after another. It was a continuation of *Let's Pretend*. As long as he was alone in that room with the television set, he could be anyone he wanted to be—do anything, go anywhere. Sometimes when there was nothing on television he wanted to see he left the apartment, to spend the whole day exploring the subways, to see how far he could travel on one dime. Other days he spent at the Bronx Zoo. He was not only playing truant from school. That year he began to play truant from life.

On April 16, 1953, the Children's Court in the Bronx sent Lee to Youth House, New York City's detention home for delinquent children. It was a dingy old building on Manhattan's lower East Side, between First and Second avenues on Twelfth

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Street. Lee spent six weeks in the old jail-like shelter with its barred windows overlooking crowded tenements.

Lee had not been sent to Youth House for punishment but for "observation and diagnosis." The records of "Case Number 26996" show that he was given a set of psychological tests by Irving Sokolow, a Youth House psychologist, who found all of Lee's scores "above average for his age group."

As Mr. Sokolow described him:

Lee is a good-looking slender youngster. He appeared alert and generally well motivated throughout the test situation, exhibiting some apprehensiveness.

He achieved an I.Q. of 118 on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (abb.) indicating present intellectual functioning in the upper range of bright normal intelligence. *All his scores were above average for his age group*, appreciably so in the verbalization of abstract concepts and in the assembly of commonly recognizable objects. His method of approach was generally an easy, facile and highly perceptive one. Although presumably disinterested in school subjects, he operates on a much higher than average level.

Lee achieved a 7.9 grade level in reading rate and 7.5 grade level in comprehension, suggesting no retardation in this area. In the area of arithmetical reasoning he is above the average for his age group.

Mr. Sokolow noted that Lee appeared to be "a somewhat insecure youngster, exhibiting much inclination for warm and satisfying relationships to others. . . . He exhibits some difficulty in relationship to the maternal figure, suggesting more anxiety in this area than in any other."

This observation didn't surprise me when I first read it years later. Lee had plenty of reason to feel anxious about "the maternal figure." After I went into the service in July, 1952, Lee found himself alone with Mother, constantly having to "handle" her temperament without help from John or me.

For the first time since he had begun to grow up, he had to deal with her by himself. I know from my own experience how frustrating this could be. He didn't have the strength to cope with Mother *all* the time.

If Lee was at fault in his relationship with Mother, then all three of us were wrong. After we grew up, all of us tried to stay out of her way as much as possible.

About three weeks after Lee entered Youth House, one of the social workers, a Mr. Scott, submitted a written recommendation that Lee have a talk with his caseworker, Miss Evelyn Strickman. Mr. Scott seemed puzzled that Lee had not made friends with any of the other boys:

He is a non-participant in any activity on the floor. He has made no attempts at developing a relationship with any member of the group and at the same time, not given anyone an opportunity to become acquainted with him. He appears content just to sit and read whatever is available. He has reacted favorably to supervision; does what is asked of him without comment. There appears to be nothing on the floor of interest to him. Each evening at 8 P.M. he asks to be allowed to go to bed. Members of the group appear to respect his seclusiveness.

When I read this in 1964, I was not really surprised. If Lee was a "non-participant" at Youth House, it was not because he didn't like games or sports. Lee always liked basketball, baseball and football, as well as solitary fishing and reading. But he didn't like to take orders from other kids. He usually wanted to be "the boss" or not play at all. He was like Mother in this respect. I've known her to lose a good job because she was too bossy and wanted to be the manager or a partner instead of just another employee. She always felt that she was somebody special and people should recognize that fact.

If Lee seemed standoffish at Youth House, he was simply reacting the way he always did to any suggestion that he be

one of the gang. Even when he was a little boy, he seemed to feel—like Mother—that he was somebody special. At Youth House he didn't want to be treated like just another inmate. Besides, Mother said that many of the boys and girls there were seriously disturbed children who had been arrested for robbing or knifing people or taking dope. Lee had never been in that kind of trouble and he felt he didn't belong with them.

If somebody in authority at Youth House had come up to Lee and said, "All right, you're the captain of this team. Choose your players," then I think he would have put down whatever he was reading, got off the bench, and joined the game. But he wouldn't *follow*, especially if another kid suggested that he play.

A few days later, Miss Strickman submitted her report. She had talked to Lee for a long time and she had also interviewed Mother. Lee told her that what he really wanted, more than anything else, was to be on his own and join the service. She told him that if he didn't like living with other boys—he said he found it disturbing—then he might not like military life, but he said he would "steel" himself to do it.

Lee's wish to join the service was taken for granted by most of the people who knew him. After John left for the Coast Guard and I decided to join the Marines, he talked of nothing else. He had seen us escape from Mother that way. To him, military service meant freedom.

Miss Strickman questioned Lee about his relationship with Mother:

... He said she told him to go to school, "but she never did anything about it." When he was asked if he wished that she would do something he nodded and finally emerged with the fact that he just felt his mother "never gave a damn" for him. He always felt like a burden that she had to tolerate, and while she took care of his material needs, he never felt that

she was involved with him in any way or cared very much what happened to him. When Lee and his mother are home together, he is not uncomfortable with her, but they never have anything to say to each other. She never punishes him because she is the kind of person who just lets things ride. . . . He felt that she was very much like him, in a way, because she didn't talk much. She has a few friends who visit occasionally, but she is equally silent with them. Lee feels that his mother has always left him to shift pretty much for himself and showed no concern about him whatsoever.

Lee told Miss Strickman "that he feels almost as if there is a veil between him and other people through which they cannot reach him, but he prefers this veil to remain intact."

After interviewing Mother and discussing with her what might be done for Lee, Miss Strickman said that she was afraid Mother didn't understand that Lee's truancy was a symptom of a condition that needed treatment. According to her report:

... I feel that her own attitude about social workers, probation, etc., would inevitably communicate itself to the boy and that if he started showing improvement in therapy I have the feeling she is one of those mothers who would have to break it up. On the other hand, Lee himself is so averse to placement [in a children's home] at this time that I have some question, too, as to what would be accomplished by sending him away.

After these preliminary reports had been assembled, they were sent to the chief psychiatrist at Youth House, Dr. Renatus Hartogs, who studied them and then interviewed Lee. Some of Dr. Hartogs' comments have been widely quoted in newspapers and magazines, making it seem that he considered Lee potentially dangerous when he was thirteen years old. In his book about Lee and Jack Ruby, *The Two Assassins*, published in 1965, Dr. Hartogs says that he realized at once that Lee was "choked with silent rage."

Dr. Hartogs wrote in 1953:

Lee has vivid fantasy life, turning around the topics of omnipotence and power, through which he tries to compensate for his present shortcomings and frustrations. He did not enjoy being together with other children and when we asked him whether he prefers the company of boys to that of girls, he answered—"I dislike everybody." His occupational goal is to join the Army.

If Dr. Hartogs considered Lee dangerous when he wrote his report, that feeling does not come through to me when I read the psychiatrist's words. He did describe Lee as a "tense, withdrawn and evasive boy who dislikes intensely talking about himself and his feelings. He likes to give the impression that he doesn't care about others and rather likes to keep to himself so that he is not bothered and does not have to make the effort of communicating. . . . Strongly resistive and negativistic features were thus noticed—but *psychotic mental content was denied and no indication of psychotic mental changes was arrived at.*"

Dr. Hartogs noted that Lee *claimed* to be "very poor" in all school subjects. Actually, the psychiatrist found him "a youngster with superior mental endowment functioning presently on the bright normal range of mental efficiency." In spite of Lee's truancy, tests showed that he was not far behind in his school subjects. As Dr. Hartogs explained it, "The discrepancy between the claims and his actual attainment level shows the low degree of self-evaluation and self-esteem at which this boy has arrived presently, mainly due to feelings of general inadequacy and emotional discouragement."

After summarizing his findings, Dr. Hartogs recommended that Lee be released from Youth House on probation—under certain conditions: "that he seek help and guidance through contact with a child guidance clinic where he should be treated

preferably by a male psychiatrist who could substitute, to a certain degree at least, for the lack of a father figure. At the same time, his mother should be urged to seek psycho-therapeutic guidance through contact with a family agency."

If Lee did not cooperate in this plan, the psychiatrist said, perhaps he would have to be taken away from Mother and placed in a children's home, but Dr. Hartogs wanted to begin by letting Lee go home with Mother. He wrote:

It is our definite impression that treatment on probation should be tried out before the stricter and therefore possibly more harmful placement approach is applied to the case of this boy. The Big Brother Movement could undoubtedly be of tremendous value in this case and Lee should be urged to join the organized group activities of his community, such as provided by the PAL or YMCA of his neighborhood.

Mother later denied that she had ever been told that Lee needed psychiatric treatment. It is possible that the suggestion was made in such technical language that she didn't understand how urgent it was—or maybe she just couldn't face the truth. In any case, she never admitted that there was anything abnormal about Lee's behavior. If she had faced it—if she had seen to it that Lee received the help he needed—I don't think the world would ever have heard of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mother told the Warren Commission, "I did not think it was anything serious, because the Texas laws are not like the New York laws. In New York, if you are out of school one day you go to children's court. In Texas the children stay out of school for months at a time."

To Jean Stafford, author of *A Mother in History*, Mother said, "I have to smile a little bit because boys do play hooky. I don't say it is the right thing to do and I don't say children should do it, but I certainly don't think it's abnormal."

A few days after Dr. Hartogs submitted his report, in May,

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Lee appeared in court with Mother and was sent home on parole until September 24. His probation officer, John Carro, said that Lee resisted going back to school at first, but when he was told that the only alternative was commitment to a children's home, he agreed.

For the few weeks left in the school year, Lee seems to have been a model pupil. He attended school regularly and made an effort to do things with other boys. He even joined a model airplane club. In spite of his long absence from school, he managed to complete the seventh grade with passing grades.

That summer, I went to New York on leave to visit Mother, Lee, and John Pic's family. In July, I completed my course at the Aviation Metalsmith School in Millington, Tennessee, and was given a ten-day leave before reporting to the Marine Base at Opa Locka, Florida, near Miami. I drove to New York with four or five other Marines on leave.

They let me off on the New Jersey side of the George Washington Bridge and I hailed a taxi to take me to the address Mother had given me—825 East 179th Street in the Bronx.

It had been a full year since I had left Mother and Lee in Fort Worth and we had a lot of catching up to do. They seemed really glad to see me, and I was glad to be with them again. It promised to be a happy reunion.

Lee told me, right away, that the Bronx Zoo was just a block or two away from the apartment and he wanted to show it to me. Lee always loved animals and he said he spent a lot of time at the zoo. On the first morning of my leave, he took me over as soon as the gates opened and we explored the zoo for at least half the day. Then he wanted to show me the Times Square area.

As we traveled downtown on the subway, Lee gave me a detailed explanation of the subway system and named a long list of places I should see. I could tell that he knew his way around

the city and told him I would just let him plan the itinerary. He would be my guide.

Mother was working, at the time, in a women's shop in the Empire State Building, on the street floor. When we came up out of the subway at Times Square, Lee headed straight for the Empire State Building. We went in to see Mother for a few minutes, then took the elevator to the top of the building where Lee guided my over-all view of his city. He began to map my tour, from Wall Street to the Museum of Natural History.

During that week in New York, Mother and Lee did everything they could to make me enjoy my visit. Both of them seemed to be in good spirits. If they quarreled when I was not around, they declared a truce while I was there. Not once did anybody mention Lee's troubles in school, or Youth House, or his probation officer.

John and Marge, too, made a special effort to show me a good time. One night Marge arranged a blind date for me with one of her girl friends and the four of us went out together. John said nothing about Lee's problems. When the whole family was together, I sensed a little tension between Mother and John, but it didn't seem unusual to me. There had always been friction between Mother and John. A couple of times, I realized that *something* was wrong, but nobody said what it was. I hesitated to ask John. I knew, anyway, how he felt about Mother's tendency to interfere in his life.

Before I had time to wonder very much, my leave was over and I had to head for Florida. When Lee took me to the bus station I told him how much I had enjoyed the sight-seeing and thanked him for showing me around. He seemed to me a normal, healthy, happy thirteen-year-old boy who was enjoying himself.

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During the summer Mother looked around for another apartment, so Lee could make a fresh start in a new school in the fall. On September 14, 1953, ten days before his parole was to end, Lee entered the eighth grade at P.S. 44 on Columbus Avenue at 76th Street.

Lee was due to appear in Juvenile Court on September 24. That day, Mother telephoned Mr. Carro, the probation officer, and said she would not be able to appear. She wondered if it was necessary for Lee to appear at all, since he was attending school regularly and apparently having no trouble. The judge extended the parole until October 29 and asked that the school submit to Mr. Carro a report on Lee's progress.

Unfortunately, the report from the school was not favorable. Lee's conduct in school was described as "unsatisfactory." In his report to the court, Mr. Carro wrote:

The school reports that the child has shown no improvement. Mrs. Oswald does not co-operate with the school authorities. She did not answer a summons to come to the school about her son's welfare.

One of Lee's teachers, H. Rosen, had written:

During the past two weeks practically every subject teacher has complained to me about the boy's behavior. He has consistently refused to salute the flag during early morning exercises. In many rooms he has done no work whatsoever. He spends most of his time sailing paper planes around the room. When we spoke to him about his behavior, his attitude was belligerent. I offered to help him, he brushed out with, "I don't need anybody's help!"

When Lee rejected the help that was offered, the psychologists knew that he was really crying for help while denying it. In refusing to salute the flag he was begging for attention. He *craved* attention and was trying to get it by being different

from everybody else. The experts recognized the symptoms, but Mother was not a psychologist.

Again Lee was scheduled to appear in court—this time ten days after his fourteenth birthday. Again Mother telephoned Carro and said she couldn't be there. Again the judge extended the parole—until November 19.

At this point, the probation officer suggested that Lee would be better off in a residence home for disturbed boys. He later told the Warren Commission that he did not base the recommendation on any particular evidence of mental disturbance in Lee. He simply felt that Lee didn't have a chance to improve unless he moved to another environment.

Unlike Dr. Hartogs, whose hindsight convinced him that he had recognized the thirteen-year-old Lee as "potentially dangerous," John Carro denied any such prediction. "There was nothing that would lead me to believe . . . that there would be seeds of destruction for somebody," he said in 1964. "I couldn't in all honesty sincerely say such a thing."

The judge told Carro to try to find a place for Lee at Children's Village in Dobb's Ferry, N.Y., or at the Berkshire Farm in Canaan, N.Y. Both were overcrowded and turned him down.

On November 19, Mother and Lee finally appeared in court. Mother repeated her request that Lee be discharged, but the judge said he thought Lee needed further treatment. He extended the parole until January 25, 1954, and told Carro to get in touch with the Big Brothers counseling service.

The Big Brothers office telephoned Mother in December, then sent a representative around to see her on January 4. Again Mother said that she felt Lee needed no more counseling. He belonged to the West Side YMCA, she said, and that kept him busy on Saturdays. Besides, Mother told the representative, she and Lee planned to return to New Orleans. He

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reminded her that she would have to get permission from the court, since Lee was still on parole.

The next day Mother called the probation officer, but John Carro was away on vacation. His assistant told her that she would have to wait for the court's consent before leaving New York.

When Carro returned from vacation, he wrote Mother a letter. It was returned, marked MOVED—ADDRESS UNKNOWN.

## *Chapter Four*

BY THE time John Carro's letter to Mother was returned to his office in New York, Mother and Lee were back in New Orleans. They arrived January 10 and went directly to Aunt Lillian Murret's house at 757 French Street.

Within three days Lee was registered in the eighth grade at Beauregard Junior High School. Here, he felt no need to play hooky. In New York, meanwhile, the court dismissed Lee's case.

Soon after their return to New Orleans, Mother and Lee moved to an apartment on St. Mary Street, in a different school district, but Mother continued to use Aunt Lillian's address so Lee would not have to change schools. He seemed to be doing well at Beauregard and she didn't want to uproot him again during the four months that remained in the school year.

By the end of that school year, Lee's average had gone from 73 to 77 and he was beginning to get acquainted with a few of his schoolmates. In September, 1954, still using Aunt Lillian's address, he entered the ninth grade at Beauregard. On a series of achievement tests he did well in reading and vocabulary, poorly in mathematics, but he was definitely improving.

The St. Mary Street apartment belonged to Myrtle Evans, who had known Mother since girlhood and had once visited

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us in Texas. The Evanses lived in one of the four apartments in the building, so they saw Lee every day. Mrs. Evans said that Lee was often rude to Mother. Every afternoon when he came home from school, she said, he would yell for Mother to come and fix him something to eat. Mrs. Evans seemed to think that Mother spoiled him by hopping up immediately and going to take care of him.

In the spring of 1955, Mother had a quarrel with Mrs. Evans and moved again, this time to an apartment on Exchange Place in the French Quarter. It was just a few blocks from Canal Street where Mother worked, but a long streetcar ride for Lee to Beauregard Junior High.

People who knew Lee at this time—his schoolmates, relatives and neighbors—remembered him as a quiet, solitary boy who read a lot, visited museums and the public library, wandered along the waterfront looking at the foreign ships, and bicycled alone in City Park on Saturdays. While Mrs. Evans recalled his rudeness to Mother, others were impressed by his politeness. One of the neighbors on Exchange Place, Mildred Sawyer, remembered that Lee always opened the door for her if they met in the hall.

Several classmates recalled Lee's characteristically erect posture. Bennierita Smith said she used to recognize him from a distance in the halls of Beauregard Junior High School. Even from the back, she said, she could identify him by the proud way he walked. Another schoolmate, Frederick O'Sullivan, said that he asked Lee to join the Civil Air Patrol because he admired Lee's military carriage and thought he would look good in a uniform.

Aunt Lillian said that Lee had a girl friend at school and used to talk to her on the telephone a lot. Like many other shy teen-age boys, he found telephone conversations easier

than face-to-face encounters. Lee's friend Edward Voebel said Lee was shy about girls.

It wasn't easy for Lee to make friends at school. In New York he had been teased about his "southern drawl"; now he was told he had a "Yankee" accent. Maybe he had, unconsciously, picked up a few speech characteristics in the North.

Nobody ever saw Lee pick a fight, but anyone who picked on him was in for a real scrap. Lee believed in self-defense, as John and I did. All three of us always made it a policy never to start a fight—but never to run away from one, either. One day Lee was attacked by a group of white boys who saw him sit down in the Negro section of the bus. New Orleans buses were still segregated at that time, but Lee didn't know it, or, having lived in New York, he had forgotten. Several boys jumped on Lee and started punching him. People who saw the fight said that Lee seemed unafraid. His fists flew in all directions, but he was outnumbered and thoroughly beaten up.

Another time, he fought with two brothers, notorious troublemakers of the neighborhood, who claimed that Lee had picked on the younger one. As the fight progressed down the street, from front yard to front yard, from driveway to street, it was watched by an expanding group of boys and girls on their way home from school. One of these was Edward Voebel, who said that the sympathy of the crowd was with Lee because he was "one against two," until he suddenly threw a punch that hit the younger boy and made his lip bleed.

Two days later, Voebel said, when Lee came out of the school yard, "some big guy" they didn't know just walked up to Lee and punched him in the mouth so hard that a tooth was loosened and cut through his upper lip. The big boy turned and ran. Voebel took Lee back to the school to wash his lip, which was bleeding, and tried to fix him up to go home.

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That was the beginning of what Voebel described as "a mild friendship" between the two boys.

Voebel was one of the few boys—maybe the only one—who visited Lee at home. The apartment on Exchange Place was over a pool hall, so the boys used to go downstairs occasionally and shoot a few games. Voebel said that Lee taught him how to play. The two boys didn't "hang around" the pool hall or talk to the older men, Voebel said, but always left as soon as their game was over. Sometimes they walked along the Mississippi River front docks and looked at the ships.

Another schoolmate, Frederick O'Sullivan, spoke to Lee about joining the Civil Air Patrol and included Voebel in the invitation. The boys went out to New Orleans International Airport together to see what the CAP unit was doing. At that time, the leader of the unit may have been an Eastern Airlines pilot named David Ferrie. O'Sullivan remembered the leader as "Captain Ferrie." Voebel said he *thought* Captain Ferrie was in charge.

Lee bought a CAP uniform and attended several meetings, then lost interest. O'Sullivan said he stopped coming to meetings after a few weeks.

In the afternoons after school, sometimes Lee went to the Voebels' house with Edward. He showed particular interest, Voebel said, in a collection of foreign guns that an uncle had brought back from travels during the war. Edward was interested in guns, their history and the way they worked, and he himself had learned to shoot a pistol when he was about seven years old.

Lee, too, had always showed an interest in guns, but Mother hated them and would not let us have them around the house. John and I, of course, had our rifles at military school, and when we were living in Fort Worth I used to borrow a rifle from a friend when I wanted to go hunting. Lee sometimes

went with me, but he had never owned a gun at the time he knew Edward Voebel. He told Voebel he wanted a pistol.

One afternoon when some Beauregard students were attending a band concert at Warren Easton High School, Lee and Edward Voebel were sitting together in the auditorium. Lee confided that he was going to steal a pistol. He said he had seen one in a shop window on Rampart Street and had worked out a plan to get it.

In Voebel's words:

I can't remember the pistol, to tell the truth, but I don't think it was a collector's piece. It might have been a Smith and Wesson. It was just a weapon. I think it was an automatic, but I don't remember. I really didn't pay too much attention to it.... It was maybe the following week that I was up at his house and he came out with a glass cutter and a box with a plastic pistol in it, and I think he had a plan as to how he was going to get in there and get this pistol.

Voebel tried to talk Lee out of the robbery, telling him that his glass cutter was too weak for the heavy plate glass in the window. Besides, he said, there were always burglar alarms in such windows and he would be caught. Lee said he had made up his mind to get the pistol and he was going through with his plan.

Finally, they went over to the gun shop, and Voebel showed Lee an electrical wire running along the edge of the window. It would be impossible to break the glass, he said, without setting off an alarm. After that, Lee said no more about stealing the pistol.

About that time, Lee had a Saturday job as stockboy at Burt's Shoe Store where Mother worked as cashier. He wanted to be a salesman, but the boss said he was needed in the stock room. After ten or eleven weeks he became discouraged and quit.

On July 11, 1955, after completing three years in the Marine

Corps, I was discharged. I returned to Fort Worth, where I intended to find a job and a place to live. I spent two days there, seeing old friends and making plans, then left for New Orleans on the night of the 13th, arriving the next morning.

For about a week, I stayed with Mother and Lee. They were still living on Exchange Place. It was not a very desirable neighborhood, but the apartment was neat and comfortable. As I remember, I noticed no unusual resentment between Mother and Lee and they did not quarrel while I was there. Perhaps they were trying, as they did in New York, to make things especially pleasant for me. Mother tried to persuade me to stay with them in New Orleans, but I had made up my mind to go back to Fort Worth, where I felt at home.

School was out and Lee didn't have a job at that time, so he had plenty of time to spend with me. We wandered around the city—to Audubon Park and City Park, around the French Quarter and along the waterfront—and we talked a lot. He asked me endless questions about the Marine Corps and repeated what he had said so often, that he was going to enlist as soon as he was old enough. I thought I knew what was on his mind, but now I know he didn't tell me everything.

According to Lee's own statements five years later, 1954 was the year when he first became interested in Communism. He told Aline Mosby, an American reporter who interviewed him in Moscow, that he became interested in Marxism when he was about fifteen, after an old lady handed him a pamphlet about saving the Rosenbergs. Then he began to borrow books about Marxism and Communism from the public library.

If Lee was deeply interested in Marxism in the summer of 1955, he said nothing about it to me. During my brief visit with him in New Orleans, I never saw any books on the subject in the apartment on Exchange Place. Never, in my presence, did he read anything that I recognized as Communist

literature. I was totally surprised when the information about his interest in Marxism came out, at the time of his defection to Russia. I was amazed that he had kept to himself ideas and opinions that were evidently so important to him.

Looking back to 1954, trying to find out as much as possible about what happened to Lee that year—what influenced his thinking—I can't help speculating. It is only a guess, but in view of later developments involving David Ferrie in 1967 and his dramatic death, I can't help wondering if it might have been Ferrie who introduced Lee to Communist ideas.

I realize that I have nothing solid on which to base such speculation, except the timing. In 1954, Lee joined a Civil Air Patrol group, which may or may not have been led by David Ferrie. In 1954, Lee began borrowing books on Marxism from the public library. Was it just coincidence?

The records of the Civil Air Patrol have not clarified matters. The city editor of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* has said that the records for that period are missing.

On the other hand, Edward Voebel was with Lee at the CAP meetings, and he said nothing about Lee—or Ferrie—reading Communist literature. In fact, he made a point of saying that he never saw Lee reading anything but comic books. I know that Lee's literary taste went beyond comic books, but I never suspected, until he went to Russia, that he had the slightest interest in Communism.

In September, 1955, Lee started the tenth grade at Warren Easton High School. He used to go to Aunt Lillian's for dinner every Friday, so she got to know him about as well as anyone did at that time. She said he liked seafood and he knew that she always cooked fish on Fridays.

She also recalled that Lee was interested in baseball that year, but lost interest when he didn't become a star player. This characteristic I had noticed before. It showed up many

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times in school and I think it explains his reluctance to join in any activities at Youth House when he was in New York. In Aunt Lillian's words:

"So then he got on the team, but he got off as quick as he got on. I don't know why. He never discussed it with us.... I guess they wanted him to be one of those that sit on the bench, and he didn't like to sit on the bench, so when they didn't let him play on the team and wanted him to sit on the bench, I guess he just left."

Aunt Lillian felt that Lee also lost interest in school about that time. "He got to the point where he just didn't think he ought to have to go to school," she said, "... and when I mentioned this to Marguerite that seemed to be the beginning of our misunderstanding. She didn't think her child could do anything wrong, and I could see that he wasn't interested in going to school.... I can't say that Lee ever showed that he liked school."

Three weeks after school opened that fall, the principal's office at Warren Easton received a note in Lee's handwriting, signed with Mother's name. It was dated October 7, 1955:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

Beacaus we are moving to San Diego in the middle of this month Lee must quit school now. Also, please send by him any papers such as his birth certificate that you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely

MRS. M. OSWALD

Lee dropped out of school then and tried to join the Marines just after his sixteenth birthday, October 18. He rushed into the store when Mother was at work, all excited about his plan. He said that all she had to do was to sign an affidavit, as she had done for John, saying that he was seventeen. At first she was reluctant to do it, but he kept on begging until she finally

agreed. Lee took the affidavit to the Marine Corps recruiting office and tried to sign up, but the authorities told him to wait another year.

In November he went to work as a messenger and office boy for a shipping company, Gerald F. Tujague, Inc. He made only about \$130 a month, but it must have seemed like a lot of money to him, since it was his first full-time job. Mother said he was generous with his money, using some of it to buy her a present. In her words:

... The very first pay that Lee got from this job at Tujague, Sir, he came home with a bird cage on a stand that had a planter. It had the ivy in the planter, it had the parakeet and it had a complete set of food for the parakeet. His very first pay. And then he paid his room and board. I kept this bird cage—the stand was collapsible—all these years, in the back of my car, and put it up, no matter where I was on a case, and had the bird up until two years ago—no, I had the bird, and gave it to Lee when they came back from Russia.

I have a picture of Lee with this cage in the background.

Feeling prosperous, now that he had a regular income, Lee bought other things, too. Mother said he paid \$35 on a coat for her, bought a bow and arrow set—and a gun. She said:

This is the only gun that I have known Lee to have.... When we came to New Orleans, I worked at Washer Brothers. Lee came into the place I worked one day with the gun and wanted me to sign a paper so he could sell the gun. Well, I was indignant that he came where I was working with a gun. I said, "Lee, we will talk about it later." And several of the salesladies thought that I brushed him off real fast. Well, now, Robert bought that gun from Lee and gave Lee \$10 for the gun.

I remember that gun. It was a Marlin bolt-action .22-caliber rifle, clip-fed. It wouldn't fire because the firing pin was bro-

ken. I don't know where Lee bought it, but he told me he paid about sixteen or eighteen dollars for it and would sell it to me for ten. I said I thought I could have the gun repaired, and bought it from him. One of the mechanics at Convair, where I was working, welded an extension on the firing pin for me and I used it for a while to hunt squirrels. It wasn't much of a rifle—the bolt soon broke again—but I kept it until the spring of 1963 when Vada and I moved to Arkansas. Then I gave it to one of the movers.

Lee really seemed to enjoy his work at Tujague's for a while. He felt more independent than he had ever been before, and he liked the idea of working for a shipping company. When he first told me about it, he was eager, animated and genuinely enthusiastic.

"We're sending an order to Portugal this week," he'd tell me. Or, "I received a shipment from Hong Kong, just this morning."

It was a big adventure to him—as if all the company's ships were his and he could go to any of the places named on the order blanks he carried from one desk to another. It made him feel important, just to be on the fringes of something as exciting as foreign trade.

After a while I guess he couldn't pretend anymore. He realized that he really had nothing to do with the ships and their cargoes. He was, he told me, just another errand boy. Without even a high school diploma, he was likely to remain an errand boy for a long time.

In January, 1956, Lee quit his job with Tujague's. Shortly afterward, according to the testimony of some of his fellow workers, he tried to join the Communist Party.

It was a pattern that was to be repeated many times during Lee's short lifetime: Try a job. Fail. Do something dramatic.

Any ordinary job with ordinary opportunities for advance-

ment was too slow and dull for him. But if he tried to do something ordinary and failed, then he had to do something extraordinary—or desperate—to show the world that he was somebody to be noticed.

After he left Tujague's, Lee took another job for a very short while, then went to work as a messenger for Pfisterer Dental Laboratory on Dauphine Street. He held that job for several months. There he met Palmer McBride, another messenger, who said that Lee suggested to him that the two of them join the Communist Party "to take advantage of the social functions."

In a statement to the FBI, dated November 23, 1963, McBride told how he and Lee got acquainted:

Because we both enjoyed classical music, I invited him to my home at 1416 Baronne St., New Orleans, and he did visit my home perhaps two or three times. I was living with my parents at that time, and during his visits we would listen to records in my room.

During his first visit to my home . . . the discussion turned to politics and to the possibility of war. At this time I made a statement to the effect that President Eisenhower was doing a pretty good job for a man of his age and background, but that I did feel more emphasis should be placed on the space program in view of Russian successes. Oswald was very anti-Eisenhower and stated that President Eisenhower was exploiting the working people. He then made a statement to the effect that he would like to kill President Eisenhower because he was exploiting the working class. This statement was not made in jest, and Oswald was in a serious frame of mind when this statement was made.

McBride's statement was witnessed by FBI Special Agent John R. Palmer and William J. Sims, OSI, who added:

Airman McBride said he made no report of Oswald's statement concerning President Eisenhower to any law enforce-

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ment agency. McBride now assumes that at the time he felt the statement was made by Oswald to emphasize his anti-Eisenhower feelings and not made in the nature of an actual threat on the life of the President.

Lee's interest in Communism was also remembered by William E. Wulf, who was president of the New Orleans Amateur Astronomy Association in the spring of 1956 when Lee attended some meetings with Palmer McBride.

Wulf said that Lee "came out with a statement that he was looking for a Communist cell in town to join but he couldn't find any. He was a little dismayed at this, and he said that he couldn't find any that would show any interest in him as a Communist."

Wulf seemed to feel that Lee was "definitely Communist-minded. . . . His beliefs seemed to be warped but strong."

Palmer McBride was not a member of the Amateur Astronomy Association, but he told Lee about it and both boys became interested in joining the group. Wulf evidently gave them a cool reception and didn't encourage them to become members. He said they didn't know enough about astronomy.

"Both boys struck me as lonely boys," he said, "just plain lonely. . . . I told McBride at the time, he [Lee] seemed to me to be a boy that was looking for something to belong to. . . . He hit me as somebody who was looking for identification, and he just happened, I guess, to latch on to this particular area [Communism] to become identified with."

Meanwhile, summer came and Lee was getting closer and closer to his seventeenth birthday. Mother knew that he would join the Marines as soon as he could and she would be alone that winter. Looking ahead to that time, she came to Fort Worth to see me and said she wanted us all to live together again.

I had plans of my own and told Mother I felt she would be

*LEE—Part Two*

wiser to wait until Lee joined the service, then look for a place for herself. I knew, by that time, that I was going to marry Vada Mercer in November and we wanted to find our own apartment. Mother was persistent, though. She found an apartment at 4936 Collingwood Avenue, then went back to New Orleans to pack her things and move. I agreed to move in with Mother and Lee, to help pay the bills, with the understanding that I would move out when Vada and I married.

As soon as school was out in New Orleans, Mother and Lee moved to Fort Worth. In September Lee enrolled once more in the tenth grade—this time at Arlington Heights High School. On September 28 he dropped out.

Early in October, the New York office of the Socialist Party of America received a letter from Lee. It was dated October 3, 1956, and said:

DEAR SIRS:

I am sixteen years of age and would like more information about your youth League, I would like to know if there is a branch in my area, how to join, ect., I am a Marxist, and have been studying socialist principles for well over fifteen months I am very interested in your Y.P.S.L.

Sincerely,  
LEE OSWALD

A little more than two weeks after he wrote the letter, Lee turned seventeen and was ready to enlist in the Marine Corps. When he told me what he planned to do, I asked him to think about finishing high school before enlisting. He already knew how hard it was to find the kind of job he wanted without a high school diploma. I think Lee considered my advice carefully, but then decided to go ahead and join the Marines. He said he thought he would be able to finish his education in the service.

Lee asked me if I would mind if he went ahead and enlisted

right away, without waiting for my wedding in November. I told him to make up his own mind. "The sooner you go, the sooner you'll get out," I added.

Mother didn't try to talk him out of going. I don't think she ever felt that higher education was very important. She testified that she told the social worker in New York:

I said, "I believe strongly in education, but not to the extent that a mother should go out and work and deprive her children of a mother's home and love in order to make the extra money to give her children a college education," because I happen to know that a college education is sometimes not as important as wisdom. There are college graduates who do not know how to apply their ability. . . .

Her statement sums up pretty well what she always told us, too. I guess she felt that if she had managed to get along with a ninth-grade education, so could we. The important thing, she always told us, was to get to work and make a living.

So Lee enlisted. On the morning of October 24 he boarded a bus to travel the thirty miles to Dallas, to take his physical exam and be sworn in. Then he flew to San Diego.

When he left, I think Mother felt relieved. She knew he would be fed and clothed. I would be leaving her in November, then she would have only herself to worry about.

Lee was more than relieved. On his own for the first time, he was looking forward to an adventure.

## *Chapter Five*

WHEN we said good-bye in Fort Worth on October 24, Lee was still my kid brother, a seventeen-year-old boy excited over his big adventure. He had dreamed of joining the Marines since he was twelve years old; now he was actually going to *be* a Marine.

Less than three years later, when Lee left the Marines, he wasn't a kid anymore. He was not yet twenty, but a lot had happened to make him grow up. At the time when all of these things were happening to him, I knew very little about my brother's activities. My own life was so full of changes—a wife, new job, new responsibilities—that I didn't keep up with all of the changes in Lee's life. Later, the story was pieced together for me, in Lee's own words and in the words of men who were with him during those years. As the pieces fell into place, I could see the emerging pattern—the fatal pattern that determined the course of his life.

When he left Dallas, Lee went directly to San Diego, California, where he reported for duty at the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot on October 26, 1956. Like all Marine recruits, Lee was given marksmanship training right away.

I know from my own experience that as soon as a recruit arrives in boot camp he is weighed, measured, questioned interminably, given various physical and mental tests, and issued

a uniform. Then he is ready to learn to handle a gun. At first, the M-1 rifles and .22-caliber pistols are not loaded. Recruits are taught to sight, aim, and squeeze the trigger; then they learn proper positions for firing and go through a series of dry firing exercises. After that, they are given live ammunition. On the rifle range they practice firing fifty rounds a day for five days at distances up to 500 yards before they are tested and rated.

In December, about five weeks after he went into the Marine Corps, Lee scored 212 on his test, two points above the minimum requirement for a "sharpshooter" rating. (He didn't do as well two and a half years later, when his score of 191 on another range just barely qualified him for a "marksman" rating.)

Lee wrote to me three or four times while he was in boot camp. I still have one letter, postmarked San Diego, December 17, 1956, less than a month after my marriage to Vada. "I guess you two lovebirds are putting up Christmas tree decorations by now," he wrote. We exchanged letters about once a month or every six weeks.

After boot camp, Lee was sent to Camp Pendleton, California, for further training, reporting on January 18, 1957. He had asked for duty in aircraft maintenance and repair, the same general field I was now in. (I was a hydraulics mechanic in aircraft maintenance in the Marines.) He was recommended for the duty he requested.

On one or two weekends, Lee went with the other men in his squad to Tijuana, Mexico. One of his fellow recruits, Allen R. Felde of Milwaukee, said that Lee never stayed with the other men in Tijuana but always went off by himself, then met them when it was time to go back to camp. This didn't surprise me. I think he just enjoyed exploring alone—he always did.

Felde, who was in Lee's squad and shared the same tent,

said that Lee liked to talk politics, but the other boys in the tent weren't interested. Lee wrote letters to senators, Felde said, and sent several to Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Felde had a feeling that Lee was "left-winged." He said Lee spent a lot of his free time in the Marine base library and always brought books back to his quarters to read. The men in the platoon considered Lee "a good talker with an excellent vocabulary," Felde said.

At the end of February, Lee came home to Fort Worth to spend his first two-week leave. We had a lot to talk about. I wanted to tell him about my job at Convair where we were testing and working on fuel component systems for the B-58 bomber. It was Lee's first visit since my wedding and I wanted him to get better acquainted with Vada.

He was in good spirits—enthusiastic about the Marines, glad to be home for a while, full of anticipation over his next assignment. I don't think I ever saw him happier.

One weekend when Vada and I went out to her family's farm, Lee went along. It was a medium-size dairy farm where Vada had grown up with her sister and younger brother. Her parents and brother still live there.

Lee loved that farm. He always did like hunting and fishing—anything outdoors. He always seemed so much more relaxed when we were out in the open. That weekend he was really enjoying himself. Vada's brother had a good quarter-horse mare on the farm, almost a hundred percent Palomino. Lee decided to ride her, but she gave him a hard time. She had a hard mouth and a head of her own and Lee hadn't ridden very much. He got a little red in the face when she started cutting around between two corrals, trying to throw him off, but he hung on. I think he felt pretty good that he hadn't let her throw him off, but he didn't try to ride her again.

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That same weekend, we went hunting for squirrels—Lee and I and Vada's brother. We never did find any squirrels, but Lee shot a funny-looking animal that none of us had seen before. We couldn't identify it at all. It wasn't a raccoon, but it had a big bushy tail like a coon's, a long, skinny brown body, and a sharp-pointed snout. Lee carried it back to the house and my father-in-law said it was a ring-tailed cat, the first one he had seen around there in fifteen or twenty years. I haven't seen one since that day. It really made Lee's weekend, being the first one to find a ring-tailed cat.

Mother wasn't with us at the farm that day. She and I were not on the best of terms just then and I didn't see her very much, even during Lee's visit. He was staying with her at her apartment, but he spent a lot of time at our house—and the house was one of the reasons why Mother was annoyed with me.

Vada and I had lived in an apartment when we first married, but we were looking around for a house. One Sunday afternoon I telephoned Mother and asked if she would like to drive around with us to look at houses. When we went by to pick her up, I knew I had made a mistake. She had a list of suitable houses all ready for us and she told us where we wanted to look. The first or second house she showed us had a garage apartment with it and I began to have misgivings. I said I didn't like the house, even from the outside, but Mother said, "Let's just look inside, anyway." Then she kept telling us how comfortable the house was and suggested that if we took it she could live in the garage apartment and help us with the payments.

We simply said we didn't like the house and put an end to the suggestion right then. By the time we found a house we did like, Mother understood that we didn't intend to have her living with us. I'm sure she didn't like our attitude, but

we knew that we could not have a life of our own unless we kept a reasonable distance between our household and Mother's.

So, when Lee came home on leave, Mother and I were still avoiding each other. I didn't see her with Lee very much during those two weeks, but they seemed to have declared a truce. At least I heard about no quarrels.

He left us early in March, still full of enthusiasm for the Marines. On March 18 he reported to the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida, for basic instruction in his specialty. This included basic radar theory, map reading, and air traffic control procedures. He applied himself to his studies and made good progress—good enough, at least, to win him a promotion to Private First Class, effective May 1. His ratings of 4.7 in conduct and 4.5 in proficiency were the highest he ever achieved during his Marine Corps career. A minimum average of 4.0 was required for honorable discharge.

Lee's work at the Jacksonville base—and later at Keesler Field—required him to deal with confidential information relating to radar jamming and "friend-or-foe" identification procedures. Ordinarily, new recruits were not given access to any such information, but exceptions were made for radar operators—if they obtained clearance. Lee's record shows that he was cleared on May 3, 1957, "after a careful check of local records had disclosed no derogatory data."

With this clearance, Lee was allowed to handle anything up to the "confidential" level and was barred only from "secret" and "top secret" information. His personal file doesn't show that he was ever given higher clearance—or that the original security clearance was ever withdrawn.

When Lee completed his course in Jacksonville, he ranked 46th in a class of 54 students. Then he was sent to Keesler Air

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Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, for instruction in aircraft surveillance and radar.

He used several weekend passes to go to New Orleans, about a hundred miles away. He always felt that New Orleans was his home—more than Fort Worth—and he enjoyed visiting Aunt Lillian and her family.

At the end of June, when he completed his course at Keesler Field, Lee came back to Fort Worth for a final visit before reporting for duty in California. I don't remember much about that visit, except that the weather was uncomfortably hot—Texas hot—too hot to do anything we didn't have to do.

I do remember one trivial incident that has come to my mind many times since then. One day during his leave, Lee was in the car with Vada and me when I noticed another car crowding me from behind. We were approaching a traffic light at an intersection and the light was just about to turn red. I knew that if I stopped suddenly, we would be rammed by the other car, so I did the only thing I could think of to avoid a collision—I went through the red light. Almost as soon as I passed the light, I looked in the rearview mirror and saw a police car. I pulled over to the side of the road.

The policeman asked for my license and asked if I knew I had gone through a red light. I told him about the car behind me and said I couldn't think of anything else to do to keep from being hit. The policeman answered, "But the other guy would have been at fault," and he handed me a ticket. As we drove away, Lee looked back over his shoulder and muttered, "That dumb cop!" I had no reason to remember the incident and didn't think about it again until November, 1963. Witnesses to the shooting of J. D. Tippit said they heard the gunman call him either "dumb cop" or "damn cop."

After Lee arrived in California, he spent the next seven or eight weeks as a replacement trainee at the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro, near Santa Ana. Then, on August 22, he sailed for Japan aboard the *USS Bexar*, bound for Yokosuka.

The ocean voyage was a new experience for Lee, as it was for most of the new recruits. It was a leisurely crossing—more than three weeks—with plenty of time for reading and playing chess. Pfc. Daniel Powers, who had been with Lee's group since Keesler Field, said that Lee taught him how to play chess and they played as much as six or eight hours a day. He said Lee was a "proficient" chess player and usually beat him at first. Before the ship landed, Powers said, his game improved and he was able to beat Lee occasionally. He said Lee didn't like losing, "not to the point where he would get violent . . . but he was real happy and pleased when he would win."

Powers said that Lee made regular visits to the ship's library where he usually chose "a good type of literature; and the one that I recall was *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman." Powers added that Lee never read "any of the shoot-em-up Westerns or anything like that."

On September 12 the *Bexar* arrived at Yokosuka and Lee was sent on to Atsugi, about twenty miles west of Tokyo. As a radar operator, Lee was assigned to a Marine Air Control Squadron responsible for directing aircraft to their targets by radar. The members of the squadron also did some scouting for Russian or Chinese planes that might stray into the area. It was a responsible post; one that I would expect to appeal to Lee's imagination—at least at first.

He did enjoy it for a while. Daniel Powers, who was still with him at Atsugi, said that Lee gained confidence and became more aggressive, though he was never a troublemaker. Earlier, Powers said, Lee seemed to be "somewhat the frail little puppy in the litter," but in Japan he began to feel like

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a man. He had a girl friend and began to visit the servicemen's clubs in the evenings. At one point, he told Powers he didn't care if he never returned to the United States.

A few weeks after the unit arrived in Atsugi, Lee had an accident. One of the men in his unit, Paul Edward Murphy, described it later:

"One night in the barracks in Japan, I heard a shot in an adjoining cubicle. I rushed into the cubicle to find Oswald sitting on a footlocker, looking at a wound in his arm. When I asked what had happened, Oswald very unemotionally replied, 'I believe I shot myself.' " A derringer .22-caliber pistol lay at his feet.

Lee told Murphy that when he opened his locker to take out some gear, the pistol fell to the floor and went off. The bullet hit him in the left elbow. Murphy notified the officer in charge and Lee was taken to the Navy hospital at Yokosuka.

After he had spent eighteen days in the hospital, from October 27 to November 15, the wound had healed and Lee was ready to join his unit in preparing for maneuvers in the Philippines. The other consequences of his accident were to wait until after his return from maneuvers. He had been charged with unlawful possession of an unregistered privately owned weapon and the Judge Advocate General said that he had "displayed . . . carelessness or negligence," but there was no "misconduct" charge and there was no immediate punishment.

On November 20, Lee sailed for the Philippines with the squadron aboard the *Terrell County*, LST 1157. They expected to be back in Atsugi before Christmas, but their orders were changed. After maneuvers, the squadron set up a temporary installation at Cubi Point in the Philippines and stayed for most of the winter. During this period, Lee passed a test of eligibility for the rank of corporal.

In February, the squadron left Cubi Point for a series of

exercises at Corregidor, then returned to Atsugi on March 18, 1958.

Soon after he returned to Atsugi, Lee discovered that the Judge Advocate General's office was not going to forget about the incident with the pistol. He was court-martialed on April 11, then sentenced, on April 29, to be reduced to the rank of private, to forfeit \$25 of his pay every month for two months, and to be confined for 20 days at hard labor. The confinement was suspended for six months, so Lee returned to radar operations.

That summer, June 27, Lee was court-martialed again after a sergeant accused him of assault. The sergeant said that Lee had come over to him in the Bluebird Café in Yamato and had poured a drink on him. Then, said the sergeant, Lee had insulted him with "provoking words." Lee admitted that he had been slightly drunk, but he said he spilled the drink accidentally and didn't remember insulting the sergeant.

This was a side of Lee's personality that I never saw. He never drank, so far as I know, until he went into the Marines. I don't know when he started, but he evidently did drink occasionally while he was overseas—several of his fellow Marines testified that he sometimes got drunk. After he came home, I never saw him drink, ever. He didn't smoke, either.

Lee was found innocent of deliberately pouring the drink, but guilty of using "provoking language" to the sergeant. He was sentenced to confinement for 28 days and the previously suspended 20-day sentence was added to that. He had to forfeit \$55 of his pay and his request for extended overseas duty was denied.

I can only guess at his disappointment, but I know how much his foreign adventure meant to him. Now it was almost over. Without the extension he had asked for, he would have

to return to the United States in the fall. He spent most of the summer, until August 13, in the brig.

Lee had one more chance to see an exotic corner of the world before he was shipped home. On September 14 he sailed with his unit for the South China Sea area. They sailed around the islands for two weeks, reaching Ping Tung, North Taiwan, on September 30 and returning to the base at Atsugi on October 5. The next day he was transferred out of the unit and put on general duty for a month before returning to Stateside duty.

He sailed for home on November 2 aboard the USNS *Barrett* and docked in San Francisco on the 15th. Four days later he was given a 30-day leave.

He came to Fort Worth by bus, as I remember it. He stayed with Mother at her apartment, but he spent a lot of time with us at our house, 7313 Davenport Street. We went out to the farm at least twice and did a little hunting for squirrels and rabbits with our .22 rifles.

I told Lee that he had just missed seeing John Pic and his family who had visited us about a month earlier, on their way to Japan. John might even have arrived in Japan before Lee left—or maybe they passed each other somewhere in the Pacific. Lee said he was disappointed that he hadn't come home earlier. It had been six years since he had seen John in New York. Three more years would go by before we all were together again.

Just before Christmas, on December 22, 1958, Lee returned to the Marine Corps Air Station at Santa Ana, California, where he spent the rest of his Marine Corps career.

Santa Ana was familiar ground, near the base where he was trained before going overseas, and he found himself among many of the officers and men he had known in Japan. Now he served on a radar crew, one of six or seven men assigned to

keep track of aircraft and plot their location, and to assist with the training of new recruits.

Among the men who remembered Lee at Santa Ana there was some difference of opinion—as there always is when many different people are asked to remember details of events in the past. Some remembered that he was unusually neat; others said he was sloppy and sometimes failed to pass inspection. Some said he was a chronic complainer; others felt that he complained no more than most men do, traditionally, when they have to live according to military regulations. But all agreed that he was intelligent and competent, that he did his job well and always carried out orders.

The officer in charge of the radar crew, First Lieutenant John E. Donovan, had a high opinion of the intelligence and capability of his men. "These are not typical Marine enlisted men," he said. "They have a much higher than average IQ. And they speak well on a given subject they are interested in—usually women and sports."

Donovan said that he and Lee did a lot of talking—but not about women and sports. During the long nights when he and Lee were on radar watch together, they had regular discussions of foreign affairs. The lieutenant, later a medical student, was a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service who received his B.S. in 1956. He said that Lee knew about his background and made a point of asking his opinion about new developments in various parts of the world.

He was very well versed, at least on the superficial facts of a given situation. His bond with me was that I was a recent graduate of the Foreign Service School, at least fairly well acquainted with situations throughout the world. And he would take great pride in his ability to mention not only the leader of a country but five or six subordinates in that country who held positions of prominence. He took great pride in talking

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to a passing officer coming in or out of the radar center, and in a most interested manner, ask him what he thought of a given situation, listen to that officer's explanation, and say "Thank you very much."

As soon as we were alone again, he would say, "Do you agree with that?" In many cases it was obvious that the officer had no more idea about that than he had about the polo matches in Australia. And Oswald would then say, "Now, if men like that are leading us, there is something wrong—when I obviously have more intelligence and knowledge than that man."

Lieutenant Donovan said that he found Lee "competent in all functions," whether he was working at aircraft surveillance, information relay, plotting on the board, or just sweeping the floor.

This description of Lee's behavior is far different from the adolescent rebellion described, just a few years earlier, by teachers and social workers in New York. Reading it now, I can see how much he had matured during those years. At Santa Ana, Lee was only nineteen, but this officer considered him responsible and disciplined. He was, I discovered later, mature enough and disciplined enough to continue his education on his own.

Remembering Lee as a bright little boy, asking endless questions and expecting answers from his older brothers, I never doubted his intelligence. When he joined the Marines and said he intended to complete his high school education while in the service, I believed he would do it. And he did. But I was surprised to learn later that he had also taught himself to speak and read Russian.

Most of his fellow Marines knew that Lee was studying Russian and admired him for it. They kidded him about his interest in Russia and sometimes called him "Comrade" or "Oswaldkovich," but they respected his determination and

hard work. One member of the squadron, Henry J. Roussel, arranged a date for Lee with an airline stewardess who was also studying Russian. Another, Mack Osborne, said that while he and Lee shared a room, Lee spent all of his free time studying or reading Russian-language newspapers. Osborne said Lee told him he was saving his money, "and one day he would do something which would make him famous."

I knew nothing about it at the time, but now I believe that Lee had made up his mind by February, 1959, or maybe even earlier, to go to Russia. He had decided what he wanted to do and he was very methodically doing it.

On February 25, Lee requested a Marine Corps foreign language qualification test. His score was not high, but he went ahead and asked for the high school level GED (General Educational Development) tests. On March 23, he took the tests in English composition, literature, social science, physical science and mathematics. He passed them all with satisfactory scores, the highest in physical science and English composition, the lowest in literature.

Before he took these tests, which led to the equivalent of a high school diploma, Lee had been promoted again to the rank of Private First Class. Soon afterward, he applied for admission to the Albert Schweitzer College in Churwalden, Switzerland.

On the application form, Lee indicated that he had completed high school by correspondence with an 85 average (an exaggeration, by about eight points) and that he had studied Russian for about a year. He wanted to attend the college, he said, "in order to acquire a fuller understanding of the subject which interests me most, Philosophy. To meet with Europeans who can broaden my scope of understanding. To receive formal education by instructors of high standing and character. To broaden my knowledge of German and to live in a healthy climate and good moral atmosphere."

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So far as I know, Lee had never studied German. But I didn't know that he had studied Russian. I had no idea, at the time, how carefully Lee was planning his new life, but he hinted to me that he had a very definite goal in mind. In a letter dated June 6, 1959, he told me:

Well, pretty soon I'll be getting out of the corp and I know what I want to be and how I'm going to be it, which I guess is the most important thing in life.

That was the last letter I had from Lee until after he left the Marines. Less than two weeks after he wrote it, he received an acceptance from Schweitzer College. He wrote them a letter, dated June 19, enclosing a \$25 registration fee.

Lee registered for the spring term, 1960, rather than the fall of 1959, because he thought he had six more months to serve in the Marines. He had entered in October, 1956, but because of his confinement in Japan after the court-martial, that time had been added to the normal three years of service. Now he was due for discharge on December 8, 1959.

On August 17, Lee applied for a dependency discharge. He had heard from Mother that she had been injured the previous December while working at the candy counter of the Fair Ridglea store in Fort Worth. She had reached for a large glass jar of candy on a shelf above her head and the jar slipped, striking her across the nose as it fell.

Vada and I heard about the accident almost as soon as it happened, though we had been out of touch with Mother for at least six months. We did know that she was working at the Fair store, but only because Vada had been shopping in the store one day and saw her at the candy counter. There had been no visits or telephone calls. We had been keeping our distance. Then, the day of her accident, she telephoned us to say that she was disabled and could not continue working. After that

she called Vada often, just to talk, but she never called me at the office.

One day, several weeks after the accident, I saw Mother waiting for a bus, so I stopped and picked her up. At that time, she told me she had been to three or four doctors for X-rays but she couldn't get any satisfaction out of any of them. They all said there was nothing wrong with her. She said, "I know there is." Her nose looked all right to me, so I thought maybe she was exaggerating the seriousness of the injury in the hope of collecting money from the company which insured the Fair store against such claims.

During the months when she was keeping us informed by telephone, I feel sure that she was also writing letters to Lee, emphasizing her financial problems. When I was in the Marines I grew accustomed to hearing about what a hard time she was having. I came to expect every letter from her to include a plea for money. Now, with this injury as her excuse, she undoubtedly harped on the subject when she wrote to Lee.

He had been generous with Mother from the time he joined the Marines, arranging to have a regular allotment taken out of his pay and sent to her every month. After he heard about her accident, he asked that an additional allotment be deducted from his pay. Then, I think, he suddenly saw Mother's injury as an opportunity to put into operation his plans for foreign travel, without waiting for a December discharge.

Soon after he received the acceptance from Schweitzer College, he wrote Mother a letter that reveals, I think, that the idea of applying for a dependency discharge may have originated with Lee rather than Mother. He wrote:

DEAR MOTHER,

Received your letter and was very unhappy to hear of your troubles, I contacted the Red Cross on the base here, and told them about it. They will send someone out to the house to

### *The Years Before*

see you, when they do please tell them everything they want to know, as I am trying to secure an Early (hardship) discharge, *in order to help you*. Such a discharge is only rarely given, but If they know you are unable to support yourself than they will release me from the U.S.M.C. and *I will be able to come home and help you*.

The rest of the letter emphasized the importance of making "the right impression" on the Red Cross worker and asked Mother for some business reference. It concluded, "Just inform them I have been your only source of income."

In August she sent him an affidavit describing her condition, along with corroborating statements from a doctor, a lawyer and two friends. Lee submitted these with his request for a discharge, together with supporting documents from the Red Cross. On September 11 he was released from active duty and headed home. He was to remain in the Marine Corps Reserve until December.

On September 14 he arrived in Fort Worth and spent three days at home. Mother set up a cot in the kitchen of her small apartment for Lee, but she was already looking for a bigger place so Lee could have his own room.

Lee could see, as I did, that Mother was not really disabled, and he told her that he did not plan to stay in Fort Worth. He said he would like to get a job on a cargo ship and travel. Mother tried to talk him out of it, even when he argued that he could make a lot more money on a ship than he could ever hope to make in Fort Worth and that he could send money home. I don't think she really listened to him.

Lee spent one day with us at our house on Davenport Street. We didn't do much—just sat around the house and talked. He told us he planned to go to New Orleans and work for an export firm, but he didn't mention getting a job on a cargo

ship. However detailed his plans may have been, he kept them to himself.

That was the last visit I had with my brother until June, 1962—nearly three years later. I still have a picture I took that day of Lee in front of our house, holding Cathy, our two-year-old daughter. He was always good with children and they always took to him. Cathy wanted to show him the new set of swings that Vada and I had set up for her in the backyard, as a birthday present. I can still picture Lee with Cathy that day, out in the backyard, gently pushing her in the swing.



The three of us with Mother in 1942. Lee, about three years old, is in Mother's lap. John is on the left, and I'm shielding my eyes from the sun. At that time we three boys were living in the Bethlehem orphanage, but we visited Mother in New Orleans on weekends.

A few years later, about 1944, we were living on Victor Street in Dallas. That's me in the sailor hat, Lee in the middle, John on the right.





Mother sent us this picture, taken in a roadside park in Arizona, when she and Lee were traveling with Mr. Ekdahl in 1946. Lee was about six and a half.

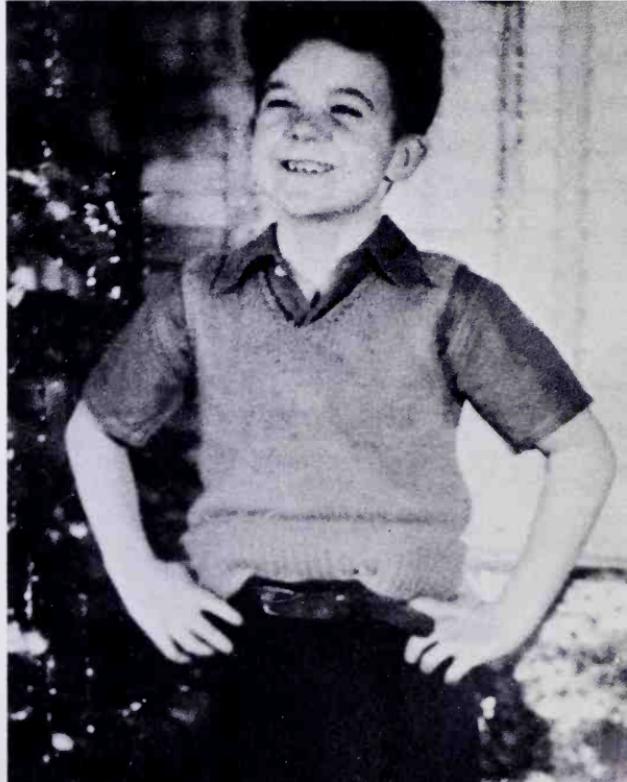


This picture of Lee with his toy locomotive may have been taken at Aunt Lillian's house—or at Mother's—in New Orleans, when Lee was about two and a half.



A traveling photographer snapped this one of Lee on a pony in front of the Victor Street house in Dallas about 1945, before Mr. Ekdahl, Mother, and Lee moved briefly to Boston.

I remember Lee as a happy little boy, interested in everything around him, always asking questions, wanting to go wherever I went and to do whatever I did.



Lee always wanted to try on my school hat when I came home on vacation from Chamberlain-Hunt Military Academy. He is wearing it in this picture, taken in 1948 in the living room of our house in Benbrook. The cap pistol is his.



Lee and I went squirrel hunting with Vada's brother on the Mercers' farm in February, 1958, when Lee was at home on leave from the Marines. That's my .22 rifle.



Lee in his Marine Corps helmet at Santa Ana, California, April, 1959, five months before his hardship discharge.



The last time I saw Lee before he went to Russia was in September, 1959, the day I took this picture of him holding Cathy in front of our house in Fort Worth.





Our Thanksgiving reunion on November 22, 1962, was the final family gathering for the three of us brothers—and the last time I saw Lee until exactly a year and a day later. Marge, John, and John Pic, Jr., are on the left; Lee and Marina on their right. I'm holding Robert Lee, Jr., in center foreground. Vada, far right, was almost crowded out of the picture.

## *Chapter Six*

MOTHER was dusting the living room of her apartment on Wednesday morning, September 16, when Lee came out of the kitchen with his suitcase and said he was leaving for New Orleans. I think he caught Mother completely by surprise. She had taken for granted her ability to persuade him to do what she wanted him to do. Now she discovered that Lee could be just as stubborn as she was.

He showed her his passport, and as she remembered it, a page was stamped IMPORT-EXPORT. She knew, then, that his mind was made up.

He left, and we heard nothing from him for nearly a week. Then Mother received a letter from New Orleans, postmarked September 20:

DEAR MOTHER:

Well, I have booked passage on a ship to Europe, I would of had to sooner or later and I think it's best I go now. Just remember above all else that my values are very different from Robert's or yours. It is difficult to tell you how I feel. Just remember this is what I must do. I did not tell you about my plans because you could harly be expected to understand.

I did not see Aunt Lillian while I was here. I will write again as soon as I land.

LEE

Mother telephoned me and read the letter to me. When she asked what I thought, I didn't really know what to say. I suggested that we just wait until he wrote again.

That was all we knew. Lee was aboard a ship bound for Europe, but we didn't know what ship or what part of Europe he was bound for. We heard no more about him until October 31—Halloween.

That morning I was at work before daylight, delivering milk on my route for Boswell's Dairy. I had just come back to the truck, about halfway through the deliveries, and was making a note of a customer's order in my ledger when a taxicab drove up, slowed down beside me, then pulled over to the other side of the street. A big, heavy man—at least six feet tall and about 200 pounds—got out of the taxi and walked up to the open door of my truck.

"Are you Robert Oswald?" he asked.

"Yes, I am."

He said he was a reporter for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. "I have a report here that your brother is in Russia," he said, taking a folded piece of paper out of his pocket.

"My brother?"

"Lee Oswald. I have a copy of the teletype and thought you might want to read it and comment." He unfolded the teletype sheet and handed it to me.

I read it through. It was the story of Lee's visit to the American Embassy in Moscow, telling how he had laid down his passport and renounced his United States citizenship. I felt a tightening in my stomach and heard myself saying "Oh, no!"

The reporter asked if I believed it.

"Well," I answered, "here it is on your teletype. I guess I believe it."

"Do you have any doubt that this is your brother?"

I looked at the teletype again. "There doesn't seem to be

any doubt," I said. Then I told the reporter, "Lee is awfully young. He's looking for excitement. I don't believe he knows what he is doing."

As I read the story, I began to realize how carefully and patiently Lee had planned his defection. This was no impulsive act, no spur-of-the-moment gesture. Perhaps he had started planning as much as a year earlier, when he began teaching himself the Russian language. The application to Schweitzer College seemed to be part of the plan. I don't believe he had any intention of attending the school, but felt his acceptance there would provide a legitimate excuse for going to Europe.

Mother's accident provided an opportunity for him to make his move sooner, without waiting for his scheduled discharge from the Marines.

Lee's use of Mother's complaints to serve his own ends was not quite so callous as it might seem. If Mother's health had been genuinely bad, and if Lee had felt that she could not work and support herself, I believe he would have stayed with her. But he knew from experience, as John and I knew, that Mother had a habit of crying wolf. When he came home to Fort Worth and saw for himself that Mother was perfectly capable of taking care of herself, I think he felt free to go ahead with his plans.

Those plans, so long dreamed about, began to take definite shape when Lee applied for a dependency discharge from the Marine Corps. As soon as he knew the discharge was coming, on September 4, he filled in an application for a passport at the Superior Court in Santa Ana, California. He stated that he intended to leave the United States by ship from New Orleans on or about September 21, 1959.

In the space provided for a statement of the purpose of his travel, Lee wrote that he planned to attend the Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland and the University of Turku in

Finland. He added that he wanted to visit Cuba, the Dominican Republic, England, France, Switzerland, Germany, Finland and Russia as a tourist. Because Lee was still on active duty with the Marines at the time he applied for the passport, he had to submit a statement, signed by a Marine Corps officer, that he was about to be discharged. He had the statement, confirming his upcoming discharge on September 11. Six days after he applied, Lee received Passport No. 1733242.

After his brief visit with us in Fort Worth, Lee boarded the first Europe-bound ship he could find. On Thursday, September 17, the day after he left home, Lee booked passage on a freighter, the SS *Marion Lykes*, scheduled to leave New Orleans the next day for Le Havre. He filled out a "Passenger Immigration Questionnaire" at Travel Consultants, Inc., the agency where he paid \$220.75 for his passage, then registered at the Liberty Hotel.

As it turned out, the ship stayed in New Orleans two days longer, departing early Sunday morning with only four passengers aboard. Lee shared a cabin with Billy Joe Lord, a boy about eighteen who was going to study in France. The other two passengers were Lt. Col. George B. Church, Jr., and his wife. All three of them said that Lee kept to himself most of the time during the eighteen-day crossing and didn't seem very friendly.

Once the ship reached Le Havre, on October 8, Lee's movements were direct and decisive. He seemed to know exactly where he was going—and it wasn't Switzerland. From Le Havre he went to England where he boarded a plane for Helsinki on October 9. That same day, in the Finnish capital, he registered at the Torni Hotel.

With the weekend ahead of him, and all consular offices closed until Monday, Lee had time for a little sight-seeing.

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Perhaps he explored Helsinki during the next two days. Early Monday morning he appeared at the Soviet Consulate to apply for a visa. Two days later he received one, valid for six days, expiring October 20. Immediately, Lee bought a train ticket to Moscow and \$300 worth of Soviet tourist vouchers. He was evidently in a hurry to reach his destination before his visa—and his money—ran out.

Lee left Helsinki on October 15 and arrived in Moscow the next day with very little cash, other than the tourist vouchers. Most of the \$700 he declared when he passed through British customs had been spent on the tickets from London to Helsinki and Helsinki to Moscow, hotel and food bills, and the vouchers. His diary describes what happened next:

October 16, 1959

Arrive from Helsinki by train; am met by Intourest Repre. and in car to Hotel "Berlin." Reges, as "studet" 5 day Lux. tourist. Ticket.) Meet my Intorist guied Rimma Sherikova. I explain to her I wish to appli. for Rus. citizenship. She is flabbergassed, but agrees to help. She checks with her boss, main office Intour; than helps me add. a letter to Sup. Sovit asking for citizenship. Meanwhile boss telephons passport and visa office and notifies them about me.

Lee kept his diary more or less regularly for two and a half years, from the day he arrived in Russia until two months before he came home. In spite of his strangely inconsistent spelling, hurried abbreviations, and the odd mixture of printing and script, I find it a dramatic and revealing narrative. He never showed it to me, but I read it in *Life* magazine after his death.

The diary describes the first few days of sight-seeing with Rima Shirokova, his sympathetic Intourist guide. She accompanied him to the Stalin-Lenin tomb and to various exhibitions, and even celebrated his twentieth birthday by giving

him a present—a copy of Dostoevski's *The Idiot*. Lee was pre-occupied with his request for Soviet citizenship, afraid his six-day visa would expire before anything could be done. Finally, on October 21, threatened with an 8 P.M. expiration deadline, he was called to the Russian passport and visa office.

After answering a few questions, Lee was simply told to go back home. He asked if his visa might be extended and was told he would be notified. At six o'clock that evening he received a call from the police, telling him he would have to leave the country before eight o'clock. The visa would not be renewed. Lee described his feelings:

I am shocked! ! My dreams! I retire to my room. I have \$100 left. I have waited for 2 year to be accepted. My fondes dreams are shattered because of a petty offial; because of bad planning I planned to much! 7 P.M. I decide to end it. Soak rist in cold water to numb the pain. Than slash my left wrist. Then plang wrist into bathtub of hot water. I think 'when Rima comes at 8. to find me dead it wil be a great shock. somewhere a violin plays, as I wacth my life whirl away.

When I read this melodramatic account of his disappointment, I recognized a familiar pattern. He had tried to do something to convince the world that he should not be ignored. When he thought he had failed in his attempt to become a Soviet citizen, he felt he had to do something even more dramatic, even if it meant ending his life.

Fortunately for him, Rima arrived in time to save him. She called for an ambulance and rushed him to a hospital where his wrist was stitched and bandaged. The next day, he realized that he had been placed in a ward for mental patients, and Rima arranged to have him transferred.

After a week in the hospital, Lee had the stitches removed from his wrist and was discharged, in care of Rima, who took him back to his hotel. Intourist had arranged for him to move

from the Berlin to the Metropole. After she helped him move his belongings to his new quarters, Rima informed him that the passport office wanted to see him.

That afternoon, Rima took Lee to the passport office where he was interviewed by four officials. When they asked if he wanted to go home, he told them he intended to remain in the Soviet Union. They gave him no assurance, one way or the other, but asked if he had any identification other than his passport. Lee gave them his Marine Corps discharge papers and they told him to go back to the hotel and wait for an answer.

"How long will it be?" he asked.

"Not soon," he was told.

Three days later, on October 31, the waiting became unbearable. He decided to take some action on his own. Without telling Rima what he intended to do, he took a taxi to the American Embassy and told the receptionist he wanted to see the head consular official.

"If you are a tourist, please register," she said.

Lee took out his passport, laid it on the desk, and told her, "I have come to dissolve my American citizenship."

The receptionist walked into the office of Richard E. Snyder, the Second Secretary of the Embassy, who was chief consular official. Lee picked up his passport and followed her. Mr. Snyder asked Lee to sit down and his assistant, John A. McVickar, looked up from his work and nodded.

Lee repeated his intention to dissolve his citizenship and put his passport on Snyder's desk. The consul noticed that Lee had inked out his address in the United States. Then Lee handed him a note:

I Lee Harey Oswald do hereby request that my present citizenship in the United States of America, be revoked.

I have entered the Soviet Union for the express purpose of

appling for citizenship in the Soviet Union, through the means of naturalization.

My request for citizenship is now pending before Suprem Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

I take these steps for political reasons. My request for the revoking of my American citizenship is made only after the longest and most serious considerations.

I affirm that my allegiance is to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Both Snyder and McVickar remembered Lee as very young, arrogant, and "neatly and very presentably dressed." Snyder said he "displayed all the airs of a new sophomore partyliner." Because Lee seemed so young, Snyder didn't allow him to renounce his citizenship immediately. He told Lee that the papers would take some time to prepare and he would have to come back in a few days.

Snyder said later, "Particularly in the case of a minor, I could not imagine myself writing out the renunciation form, and having him sign it, on the spot, without having him leave my office and come back some other time, even if it is only a few hours intervening."

After about forty minutes, Snyder dismissed Lee. Back at the Hotel Metropole, Lee wrote in his diary:

I leave Embassy, elated at this showdown, returning to my hotel I feel now my enorgies are not spent in vain. I'm sure Russians will except me after this sign of my faith in them.

Meanwhile, the Embassy was following its routine for dealing with defectors. Snyder sent a telegram to the State Department describing his interview with Lee. Copies were sent at once to the CIA and the FBI, who started their own investigations.

By midafternoon, Lee was aware that his visit to the Embassy was attracting attention—more attention than he had antic-

ipated. Two reporters called on him, but he refused to be interviewed. Then there were telephone calls from *Time* and various news services. He refused to accept telephone calls unless he was told who was calling.

Meanwhile, the news had traveled to the United States and our telephone was already ringing. After I had learned the news from the *Star-Telegram* reporter, I finished delivering the milk, then rushed home. Mother had already called, asking what to do. She had heard the news on the radio and wondered if we had heard. When I talked to her I told her about the reporter who had brought me the teletype story. She said, "Tell the reporters I am under a doctor's care, and all I have to say is, 'No comment.' "

Reporters kept us busy all day and I was trying to figure out how to get in touch with Lee. Finally I decided to send a telegram, using some family phrase or expression he would be sure to recognize and know the message came from me. When he was little, I used to tell him, "Keep your nose clean." So the next morning I sent Lee a telegram, to the Hotel Metropole in Moscow:

LEE, THROUGH ANY MEANS POSSIBLE CONTACT  
ME. MISTAKE. KEEP YOUR NOSE CLEAN.

Lee stayed in his room for two weeks, refusing to see anyone or talk to anyone except Rima. Mother and I tried to reach him by telephone, but he stubbornly refused to talk to us.

On November 13, I received a letter from Lee, dated November 8, acknowledging my telegram:

DEAR ROBERT

Well, what shall we talk about? the weather perhaps? Certainly you do not wish me to speak of my decision to remain in the Soviet Union and apply for citizenship here, since I'm afraid you would not be able to comprehend my reasons. You

*LEE—Part Two*

really don't know anything about me. Do you know for instance that I have waited to do this for well over a year, do you know that I [Russian words] speak a fair amount of Russian which I have been studying for many months.

I have been told that I will not *have* to leave the Soviet Union if I do not care to. this than is my decision. I will not leave this country, the Soviet Union, under any conditions, I will never return to the United States, which is a country I hate.

Someday, perhaps soon, and then again perhaps in a few years, I will become a citizen of the Soviet Union. but it is a very legal process, in any event I will not have to leave the Soviet Union and I will never.

I recived your telegram and was glad to hear from you, only one word bothered me, the word "mistake." I assume you mean that I have made a mistake. it is not for you to tell me that you cannot understand my reasons for this very serious action.

I will not speak to anyone from the United States over the telephone since it might be taped by the americans.

If you wish to corespond with me you can write to the below address, but I really don't see what we could take about if you want to send me money, that I can use, but I do not expect to be able to send it back.

LEE

Lee Harvey Oswald  
Metropol Hotel Rm. 233  
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

The tone of the letter was defiant, and I think he intended it to sound optimistic as well. Actually, he was feeling anything but optimistic. His diary reveals that he did not know, at the time he wrote the letter, whether or not the Soviets would allow him to stay in their country. His visa had expired and he had not received another. His presence in Moscow was, technically, illegal.

Confined to his hotel room with a case of dysentery, Lee was miserable. To his diary he confided that he was enduring "days of utter loneliness." Finally, on November 15, he felt he had to talk to somebody. Searching through his pockets, he found a card left with him by one of the reporters who had come to the hotel on the day the Embassy released the news of his defection. He had refused to talk to her at the time, but now he decided to telephone Aline Mosby of United Press International.

Immediately after Lee called, Miss Mosby drove to the Metropole, bringing a photographer. Lee was polite but stiff, she said, and seemed "full of confidence." He talked, almost nonstop, for about two hours, telling her about his plans for getting a job and continuing his education in Russia. He told her he had seen American imperialism in action while he was in the Marine Corps and had made up his mind then to defect to Russia. He had saved \$1,500, he told her, in preparation for the trip.

Miss Mosby said that the only regrets he expressed concerned Mother and me. He seemed sorry that he hadn't told Mother about his plans, and he said he was afraid I might lose my job because of the publicity. After Miss Mosby and the photographer left, Lee told his diary, "Again I feel slightly better because of the attention."

On November 16 Lee received his first words of encouragement from the Soviets. His diary reports:

A Russian official comes to my room asks how I am. Notifies me I can remain in USSR till some solution is found with what to do with me, it is comforting news for me.

There was no more comforting news for six long weeks. During that time he left the hotel only rarely. The bitter Rus-

sian winter made the streets uninviting to a Texas boy. He bought two self-teaching Russian language books and forced himself to study, eight hours a day.

I sit in my room and read and memorize words. All meals I take in my room. Rimmea arranged that. . . . for this month and a-half I see no one speak to no-one accept every-now-and-then Rimmea, who calls the ministry about me. Have they forgotten? During December I paid no money to the hotel, but Rimmer told Hotel I was expecting a lot of money from USA. I have \$28 left. This month I was called to the passport office and met 3 new officials who asked me the same questions I ans. a month before. They appear not to know me at all.

With twenty-eight dollars in his wallet, Lee apparently lived on credit for the rest of the year. The suspense about the status of his citizenship continued until January 4 when he was called once more to the passport office.

That day he was given a Soviet residence document for people without citizenship and was told that he would be sent to work in a factory in Minsk. The official told Lee that he would be paid 700 rubles a month at the factory. Before that, the official told him, he would receive some money through the Red Cross, to pay his hotel bills and expenses.

Things were happening so fast that Lee was too dazed to ask a lot of questions. He was disappointed that he had not been given Soviet citizenship, but he told Rima he was happy. At the Red Cross office, he received 5,000 rubles (about \$500). From this sum, he used 2,200 rubles to pay his delinquent hotel bill, spent 150 rubles on a ticket to Minsk, then boarded the train that would carry him to his new life.

Within a week, Lee had started his job as a metalworker and checker in a radio factory and had begun to meet people his own age. Within a month he was feeling right at home—

exploring the city with friendly young Russian workers, going to the theatre or opera nearly every night with a girl named Rosa, speaking the language more and more easily.

In March he was given a small apartment—one room with kitchen and bath—just an eight-minute walk from the factory. For 60 rubles a month he had it all to himself, unheard-of luxury for a Russian factory worker. “I’m living big,” he wrote in his diary. He certainly had no worries about money. On the fifth of every month he received a check for 700 rubles from the Red Cross, in addition to his monthly salary of 700 rubles, making his income about the same as that of the factory director.

Lee may have asked himself where this extra money came from. It was surely not a gift from the Red Cross, but he accepted it without asking questions. Later, it weighed on his conscience. In June, 1962, aboard the ship that brought him back to the United States, Lee wrote about this money for the first time. It was a document not made public until after his death.

He wrote that the money

came technically through the Red Cross... but it was arranged by the M.V.D. I told myself it was simply because I was broke and everybody knew it. I accepted the money because I was hungry and there was several inches of snow on the ground in Moscow at the time, but what it really was was *payment* for my denunciation of the U.S. in Moscow in November 1956 [he meant 1959] and a clear promise that for as long as I lived in the USSR life would be very good. I didn’t realize all this, of course, for almost two years.

He added that the “Red Cross” allotment was cut off as soon as he started negotiations with the American Embassy in Moscow to return home. He wrote:

I have never mentioned the fact of these monthly payments to anyone. I do so in order to state that I shall never sell myself intentionally or unintentionally to anyone again.

as for the fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_ I was supposed to recive for this \_\_\_\_\_ I refuse it. I made pretense to except it only because otherwise I would have been considered a crack pot and not allowed to appear to express my views. after all who would refuse money? ! ?

When Lee's twenty-first birthday arrived, October 18, 1960, he celebrated it with a party in his own apartment. Two of his friends brought ashtrays as birthday presents, and the guests laughed because Lee didn't smoke. It seems to have been a genuinely happy day for him. For the first time in his life he felt truly independent, with a place of his own, congenial friends his own age, enough money to live on, and two girls jealous of each other because of him. "It brings a warm feeling to me," he told his diary.

One of the girls, Ella Germain, became his favorite, though he continued to date others. After spending New Year's Eve with Ella and her family, Lee decided to propose to her. She refused, telling him she didn't love him, and besides he might be arrested someday, simply because he was an American. Lee said she told him, "There is too much against you and you don't even know it."

After Ella's rejection, Lee was miserable. He was still despondent when he finally received word that he might now apply for Soviet citizenship. On January 4, one year after he received his residence document, he declined to apply for citizenship, asking only to have the document renewed for a year. By the end of January he confided to his diary, "I have had enough."

He was bored with his work and had even lost interest in the money. He complained that there was nowhere to spend it.

On February 1 he wrote to the American Embassy in Moscow and said he would like to go home.

A few weeks later he received a reply from Richard E. Snyder, the consular official who had received his renunciation of American citizenship, inviting him to come to Moscow for an interview. Lee did nothing about it right away, but on March 16 he wrote in his diary, "I now live in a state of expectation about going back to the U.S."

The next night, at a trade union dance, a pretty girl with a French hairdo and a red dress changed his plans. "Her name is Marina," he wrote. "We like each other right away."

Less than a month later Lee proposed to Marina Prusakova and she accepted. They were married on April 30, 1961. The next day, May Day, Lee confided to his diary, "In spite of the fact that I married Marina to hurt Ella, I found myself in love with Marina."

For the first few weeks of their marriage, Lee said nothing to his bride about his plans to return to the United States. When he did tell her, she seemed "slightly startled," but then told him to go ahead and do what he wanted to do. In July, during his two-week vacation from the factory, Lee decided to fly to Moscow, without police permission.

On Saturday, July 8, Lee arrived in Moscow and went directly to the American Embassy. The consular officials were not in their offices during the weekend, but Lee telephoned Mr. Snyder at home and told him he wanted to return to the United States and take his Russian wife with him. Snyder told him to ask Marina to come to Moscow and he would see what could be done. The next day, Marina flew to Moscow and joined Lee at the Hotel Berlin.

At the Embassy on Monday morning, Marina sat in the waiting room while Lee was interviewed. Mr. Snyder found him less arrogant and more mature than he had been when he

renounced his citizenship in 1959. Lee told him he had "learned a hard lesson the hard way" and had come to appreciate the meaning of freedom.

Lee was in a hurry to leave Russia before his passport expired in September, but he was told that it would be impossible to get Soviet exit papers so soon—especially for Marina. Snyder advised Lee to apply for renewal of his passport. It was returned to him that day, stamped valid only for travel to the United States. Then Marina was interviewed and given application forms for immigration.

When Lee and Marina returned to Minsk that Thursday, they discovered that their visit to the American Embassy was no secret. Everybody at the factory was talking about it. Marina began to receive telephone calls from her bosses, from the Young Communist League, and from callers who didn't identify themselves. All tried to dissuade her from going to the United States. Meetings were held at her place of work and Marina was subjected to hours of questioning. But the more she was harassed, the more determined she became.

Lee applied for exit visas and was given a stack of blanks to be filled out, along with a list of the other documents required, such as birth certificates, affidavits, and employment records. On August 20 he gave all the required documents to the Soviet authorities and was told he would have to wait three and a half months to find out whether or not they would be allowed to leave. Then Marina discovered that she was pregnant.

By this time, I knew that Lee was trying to come home. We had been corresponding regularly since May, 1961, just after his marriage to Marina, when he sent me an enthusiastic letter, telling me about his bride, his job, and life in Minsk. At that time, he said nothing about wanting to come home—and he made no mention of the 1959 announcement that he wanted to "cut all ties" with his family in the United States. I knew

he was trying to apologize, in his way. Lee never could say, in so many words, that he was sorry.

One of his letters, dated May 31, said that he didn't know if he would ever return to the United States. Six weeks later, he came out with it. As soon as he got his passport back, he wrote to me about it and said that he and Marina were doing everything they could to leave the Soviet Union.

From that time on, all of us tried to help Lee and Marina come home, and they increased their own efforts. Mother wrote letters to people in Washington; Marina asked for help from her uncle, a high-ranking official in the Minsk MVD; Lee tried to speed up the Soviet exit visas by writing to the American Embassy in Moscow; Vada and I offered them a place to stay—with us—as soon as they returned.

Through the summer and fall we exchanged letters—mostly family talk about my family and his. I could sense his growing disillusionment with life in Russia, though he did not seem personally unhappy. He was obviously in love with Marina and excited at the prospect of becoming a father. There was still a feeling of adventure in his accounts of hunting trips and descriptions of weekend excursions in the Russian countryside. He seemed to enjoy sending us presents and pictures and he asked me to send him a deflated football. He said he wanted to show some of the men at the factory how to play American football.

I sent him the football, but I never heard whether or not he organized a team in Minsk. He offered to have some Russian boots made for me, if I would send him my shoe size. I suggested that he save his money to come home on.

In spite of his satisfaction and pride at being a family man, Lee was becoming more and more impatient to get back to the United States. In his letters he complained alternately

about the Russian and American authorities who were, he felt, standing in their way.

A letter dated February 15, 1962, sounded more hopeful. His big news was that he had a daughter, June Marina (later named June Lee), born that day. He congratulated me on being an uncle and added:

The chances of our coming are very good.... We received the Soviet exit visas. I can leave the country at any time. But there are still formalities concerning Marina's *entrance visa* into the U.S.

In this same letter, he asked me to send him clippings from the Fort Worth newspaper, any stories that had appeared about him at the time his defection was made known in November, 1959. I sent the clippings, but told him he should concern himself with the future and not think about what was past history.

After three more months of suspense and uncertainty, Lee and Marina finally had all their papers in order and were told to report to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on May 24. The last letter I received from him from Russia was written the day before he and Marina left Minsk. He told me that they would be coming home by ship and would probably be there by the end of June. He added:

In case you hear about our coming or the newspapers hear about it (I hope they won't), I want to warn you not to make any statement whatsoever about us. None at all! ! !

That was the last I heard from Lee and Marina until June 13. Vada telephoned me at the office to say she had received a long-distance call from the New York City Special Welfare Center. Lee and Marina and their baby had arrived that day aboard a Dutch ship, the *SS Maasdam*, and did not have enough money to pay their fare to Fort Worth. I immediately wired \$200 to Lee, in care of the Welfare Center.

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Later, I found out that Lee refused to accept the money at first. He said he had \$63 and they would see how far they could go on that amount, relying on other welfare agencies to get them the rest of the way. Finally he was persuaded to accept the money and boarded a plane for Dallas Love Field.

Thursday afternoon, June 14, I received a telegram from the Welfare Center: **LEE ARRIVING DALLAS LOVE FIELD 7:30 P.M. TONIGHT, FLIGHT 821.**

## *Chapter Seven*

**R**IIGHT after supper that evening, Vada and I went out to Love Field to wait for Lee's plane. We took our daughter, Cathy, and our infant son, Robert Lee, to meet their baby cousin and their aunt and uncle.

We were standing at the gate when the big commercial jet taxied in slowly from the runway. As the doors of the plane opened and passengers began to descend, we craned our necks to get the first glimpse of Lee. Vada spotted them before I did.

"There he is!" She tugged at my elbow.

Then I saw him, looking rather anxiously toward the gate. The thought crossed my mind that maybe he expected us to run out and meet him, but we weren't allowed to. Behind Lee was Marina, carrying June Lee.

Just before they reached the gate, Lee caught sight of us and waved. We ran to him and embraced him, then greeted Marina and the baby.

Lee looked around as if he were expecting someone else. "No reporters?" he asked.

"I managed to keep it quiet," I told him, "as you asked in your letter."

He seemed a little disappointed, but said no more about it. We kept him busy answering questions about their trip and

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Marina was chattering away in Russian, urging him to translate her words to us.

As we walked up the corridor to the main waiting room, I was aware that people were staring at us. Not that they recognized Lee. I think they were just curious because they heard a foreign language being spoken and Marina's Russian woolen dress probably looked a little strange in the Texas heat.

We walked out to the car with everybody talking at once. Lee and Marina were both excited. Lee and I left our wives and children sitting in the car while we went back to the luggage room to pick up their two suitcases. Lee talked about the trip and asked me about my job and family—but he didn't ask about Mother.

Once the luggage was in the trunk of the car, we drove directly to our house at 7313 Davenport Street in Fort Worth. On the way, we tried to point out a few landmarks to Marina. After a while we learned to allow time for Lee to translate everything we said into Russian for Marina.

Our house was fairly spacious with a large living room, two bedrooms, a bath, dining room, and large kitchen with enough room for a breakfast table and chairs. We were not overcrowded, as Mother said later to the press. While Lee and Marina were with us, we simply gave them Cathy's room and she slept in the living room. Robert Lee's baby bed was in our room anyway, so it was simple enough to make room for guests.

While Lee and I talked, our wives were busy unpacking, washing, ironing and taking care of the babies. Marina spoke no English at all and Vada spoke no Russian, but the two women got along well together. When Lee wasn't there to translate, they managed to communicate with sign language.

Marina was tired after the long days of traveling, but she pitched in immediately to help Vada with the housework. Some of the people who knew Marina later said that she was

lazy and a sloppy housekeeper, but Vada always denied this. Marina never found it easy to get up early in the morning, but she would work late at night—ironing, cleaning, mending—doing anything she could to help.

Marina was enthusiastic about everything in and around the house, from the kitchen equipment inside to the trees and shrubs outside. She asked—and Lee translated—“Will we be able to live like this?” He answered, “In time. Just give me time.” She admired Vada’s clothes and the way she wore her hair. Marina wore her hair long, done up in a bun in back. Vada’s was short and fluffy. After the first few days with us, Marina asked Vada, through Lee, to cut her hair. She wanted to look more American. Besides, short hair would be cooler. Vada is a licensed hairdresser and was able to give Marina an expert haircut—and her first permanent. Marina was delighted with the result and thanked Vada in a flood of Russian. She was even more pleased when Lee said he liked it, too.

Marina was like a child dressing up in her mother’s clothes when Vada, continuing the “Americanization” process, offered her some lightweight things to replace her heavy Russian woolens. She tried on some summer blouses and a skirt, but hesitated over a pair of walking shorts. She said she had never had any shorts before and felt a little embarrassed about wearing them in public, even though they were very modest—almost to her knees.

During the first few days in Fort Worth, Marina seemed happy, yet she seldom smiled. When I asked Lee about this, he said it was just feminine vanity, not homesickness or sadness. Before they left Minsk, he said, she had been self-conscious about a crooked tooth and decided to pull it herself. Then she was conscious of the space and didn’t want to show it by smiling.

She forgot all about the missing tooth the day we took her

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to a supermarket. It was the first one she had ever seen. The sight of all those rows and rows of food brought on a broad grin that exposed every tooth—and she didn't care. She could hardly wait to push the shopping cart.

That weekend, Lee showed me some notes he had been keeping for a book or article he intended to write about his life in Russia. I read the first fifteen or twenty pages, mostly about living conditions in Minsk and the factory where he worked. Nothing very political. We didn't talk about politics at all. We both knew we didn't see eye to eye on political questions, so we just avoided them.

On the first Monday after his return to Fort Worth, Lee gathered up his notes and took them to Mrs. Pauline Virginia Bates, a public stenographer whose name he had found in the telephone book. He told her about his plans for the book and arranged to have her type the manuscript for him. That day, and for the next two days, Lee worked with Mrs. Bates in her office, editing the manuscript, translating Russian phrases, deciphering his handwriting. At the end of the third day he gave her \$10 and said he couldn't afford to have the rest of the book typed at that time.

Lee continued to work on the book at home. Vada told me that during the week, while I was at work, Lee sometimes spent hours at a stretch going over his notes and adding to them. One day, when he looked up from his writing, she asked him if he could stand to live in Russia for a lifetime, under the conditions he had described to us.

"I would rather die," he said.

I had never believed, while Lee was in Russia, that he would want to spend the rest of his life there. When he returned, I knew that he had been disappointed in what he found. But I don't think he ever regretted having gone. He felt that he had

accomplished something by going to Russia. It was something he could impress people with.

A day or two after Lee arrived, we had a telephone call from Mother. She said she was coming to Fort Worth to welcome Lee and Marina and her new granddaughter. She had been working as a practical nurse in Crowell, Texas, taking care of an elderly invalid woman. Earlier in June she had received a letter from the State Department telling her that Lee would return to the United States on June 13, but she was unable to get away from her job to meet him. He had not told her that he was coming to stay with us, but somehow she found out.

When Mother arrived in Fort Worth a few days later, she checked in at a motel, but came right over to our house. She seemed elated over seeing Lee again, raved over Marina's beauty and wanted to hold June Lee on her lap. One of the first things she said to Lee during that reunion was, "You know, Lee, I am getting ready—I was getting ready to write a book on your so-called defection."

"Mother, you are not going to write any book," Lee replied.

As Mother reported the exchange in her testimony, she then said:

"Lee, don't tell me what to do. I cannot write the book now, because, Honey, you are alive and back." But at the time I had no way of knowing whether my son was living or dead, and I planned to write the book. "But don't tell me what to do. It has nothing to do with you and Marina. It is my life, because of your defection." He said, "Mother, I tell you you are not to write the book. They could kill her and her family." That was in the presence of my son Robert Oswald and his wife.

Mother informed Lee and Marina that she was going to resign from her job and come to Fort Worth to help them. She said she would find an apartment and they could all live

together. Lee wasn't overjoyed at the idea. He was already job-hunting and he told Mother he would soon be working, then he and Marina would find their own place. But Mother had made up her mind—and when she made up her mind nobody could change it.

Lee appreciated a lot of things that Mother had done for him, but he didn't want any more help. She seemed convinced that she had been responsible for bringing him back to the United States. He resented this. He felt that he had been able to get back through his own efforts and he wanted to continue to live his own life without interference from her. He thanked her for sending the affidavits assuring support for his wife, when Marina needed them to obtain a visa, but he didn't want to be forever indebted to his mother.

Mother went back to Crowell to resign from her job, and returned to Fort Worth in July. She found an apartment on West Seventh Street, and Lee and Marina packed up their belongings and moved in with her. They had been with us four or five weeks.

The new arrangement lasted about two weeks, not nearly so long as Mother said later. She told people it was a happy time for them, but I know this wasn't true. Lee told me that they quarreled constantly, because he felt that Mother was trying to run their lives. He could hardly wait to get out and find a place of his own, but he felt helpless without a job.

Lee had started job hunting soon after their arrival, while they were living at our house, but he couldn't find a job that really interested him. When he discussed it with me, I suggested that he take any job he could get at first—a kind of pillar job, I'd call it—just to get them over the rough spots. Then he could look for something better, something he would really enjoy. I think he really wanted to settle down—that he was making a sincere effort when he took a job as a sheet-metal

worker with the Louv-R-Pak division of the Leslie Welding Company. He hated the work, but it paid him \$1.25 an hour.

In his spare time, Lee and Marina looked for an apartment they could afford, but they didn't tell Mother. Lee knew she would try to talk them out of it. In August they found a one-bedroom furnished apartment at 2703 Mercedes Street for \$59.50 a month. Immediately, they paid a month's rent in advance and telephoned me to ask if I could help them move the next day.

Lee called on a Friday, so I was free to help them on Saturday morning. When I drove up to Mother's apartment, I could hear Mother's voice before I got to the door. They were still quarreling as Lee and I carried the suitcases and boxes to the car. Marina just looked bewildered.

The new apartment was small—just one bedroom, bath, and living room with dining area near the kitchen—but it was clean and there were trees and grass outside. The neighborhood was modest, across the street from a Montgomery Ward store. Most of the houses were duplexes or small one-family bungalows. Marina seemed pleased with it—especially since it was all theirs. It would be their first chance to live by themselves since they had left Russia.

After they had moved, Mother tried to make up with Lee and Marina. She bought a high chair for June Lee and some clothes for Marina and said she would like to help them get settled. Lee was sensitive about not being able to buy things for his family and he resented Mother's gifts.

It was characteristic of him to dislike accepting favors, even the \$200 I had sent him to fly from New York to Fort Worth. He didn't want to accept it, but once he did he was determined to pay me back. I told him there was no hurry, but he insisted—and he did pay it back as soon as he could. I think he knew he could still depend on me, but he didn't want me interfering.

He didn't want Mother interfering, either. She brought food and dishes and presents for the baby, but every time she brought something new he grew angrier. Finally he asked her to stay away from the apartment and told Marina not to let her in if she came. Marina was puzzled by Lee's resentment of "Mama" and upset by their quarrels. She couldn't see what harm it would do to let Mother visit once in a while. When Lee found out that Mother had been coming to the apartment while he was at work, he was furious. Now Marina felt the force of his anger. She said later that the deterioration of their marriage began about this time.

In a narrative she wrote for the Warren Commission, Marina said that Lee became a different person after they came to the United States. "Lee was always hot-tempered," she wrote, "and now this trait of character more and more prevented us from living in harmony. Lee became very irritable, and sometimes some completely trivial thing would drive him into a rage. I myself do not have a particularly quiet disposition, but I had to change my character a great deal in order to maintain a more or less peaceful family life."

It was a lonely life for Marina, being poor in a strange new country where she didn't speak the language. Lee made no effort, as far as I could see, to teach her English. He always talked to her in Russian and seemed to prefer to keep it that way. Fortunately for Marina, they found some friends who spoke Russian.

Even before they left our house, Lee met the first of several Russian-speaking people who lived in the city and in Dallas. When he first started his job hunt, Lee had hoped to make use of his knowledge of the Russian language as a translator or interpreter. He told the Texas State Employment Agency what he wanted and they sent him to see Peter Gregory, a consultant

geologist, who gave Russian lessons at the Fort Worth Public Library and at the Air Force Base.

Lee asked Mr. Gregory's advice about getting a translator's job and Mr. Gregory asked Lee to read aloud from a Russian book he had in his office. He said Lee read very well and gave him a letter to use as a reference with his job applications. That afternoon, when I came home from work, Lee showed me the letter—a typewritten statement that Lee was qualified to speak and write the Russian language.

A few days later, Lee told me that Mr. Gregory had asked if he could come over and bring his son, Paul, a college boy who was studying Russian at the University of Oklahoma. Lee wondered if Vada and I would mind having them visit. We told him to invite Mr. Gregory and his son; we would be happy to meet them. So the two Gregorys came, and we all sat in the living room while everybody talked in Russian, except Vada and I, who didn't know the language. Occasionally Mr. Gregory would apologize to us in English for speaking in Russian, but his son needed practice in conversation. After they left, Marina commented that Paul didn't speak Russian very well.

After Lee and Marina moved to their own apartment, Paul Gregory arranged to have Marina tutor him in Russian. He paid her something like \$35 for two lessons a week. This helped Lee and Marina to buy groceries, but I don't think Lee liked the idea very much. He complained once that Marina was making more money than he was. That was an exaggeration, of course, but it showed me how frustrated he felt that he wasn't making enough money for them to live on.

Toward the end of August, Peter Gregory gave a dinner party and invited Lee and Marina. There they met several Russian-born or Russian-speaking people who lived in Dallas or Fort Worth. These people apparently liked the young couple, were

sorry to see them having such a hard time, and tried to help them.

One of the guests at Gregory's party was George Bouhe, a Russian-born Dallas accountant in his late fifties who had plenty of money. He took a kind of fatherly interest in Marina and enjoyed talking to her about Russia. After the night of the party, Bouhe frequently drove over to Fort Worth to see how Lee and Marina were getting along. He always brought presents for the baby and often used his car to take them wherever they needed to go. Sometimes he even paid for the groceries, if Lee was not around to object.

Bouhe introduced Lee and Marina to other members of the Russian community, including Mr. and Mrs. George De Mohrenchildt, a middle-aged couple who also took an interest in helping them. Lee liked De Mohrenchildt better than Bouhe, maybe because De Mohrenchildt paid more attention to him than to Marina. He felt that the others were Marina's friends, not his. And I suppose he sensed that the older man genuinely liked him. Later, when Bouhe and the others condemned Lee's rudeness to them and his cruelty to Marina, George De Mohrenchildt was the one who said, "I could never get mad at this fellow. . . . I always had a liking for him. There was something charming about him, there was some—I don't know. I just liked the guy—that's all."

Marina was having trouble with her teeth, and was still worried about the empty space where she had pulled the tooth. George Bouhe introduced her to Mrs. Elena Hall, a Russian-speaking dental technician, who arranged to take Marina to the Baylor University clinic to have her teeth fixed.

Except for the Gregorys, I never met any of the Russian-Americans who became friends of Lee and Marina. Whenever Lee mentioned any of them to me, he seemed favorably im-

pressed. I learned later that his feelings about them were mixed.

Marina enjoyed her Russian friends and appreciated everything they did for her, but Lee resented them and let them know it. It was the same old story of frustration. There was so much that he wanted to do and was unable to do. He had wanted to be somebody special, praised and admired, but others recognized him only as a poorly paid laborer who couldn't even support his wife and child. Their kindness was a constant reminder to him of his failure.

He was still working long hours at a job he hated, making \$1.25 an hour, but he stuck to it doggedly until his debts were paid. He returned my \$200 loan, even though I insisted that he wait until he was making more money, and he paid back the \$435.71 loan from the State Department that had helped him pay his way home from Russia. By the beginning of October, he was ready to look around for a better job.

Their Russian friends offered to help Lee find work and suggested that he might do better in Dallas than in Fort Worth. The De Mohrenschildts' daughter and son-in-law, Alexandra and Gary Taylor, offered to have Marina stay with them in Dallas while Lee looked for work.

I knew that Lee was planning to move. While he was working at Louv-R-Pak, he used to telephone me two or three times a week at my office. We would talk for five or ten minutes about our families or jobs. One day in early October he called and told me that they were moving to Dallas. Marina was already there, he said, living with friends until they could find a place of their own.

That night, after work, I went out to their duplex on Mercedes Street and helped Lee finish packing some things. We talked about his disappointment in his job and his chances of

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finding something better in Dallas. He told me their Russian-speaking friends were helping him.

A few days later, I received a card from Lee, dated October 10, 1962, asking me to forward any mail that came to their Mercedes Street address to P.O. Box 2915 in Dallas.

Through the Texas Employment Commission in Dallas, Lee soon found a job he liked. Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall Co., a graphic arts company, needed a trainee in its photoprint department. Here was a chance for Lee to learn a new skill while being paid for learning. He applied for the job on October 11 and was hired right away. The next day he started to work, making photocopies of advertising material.

At first he was enthusiastic about the job and optimistic about his future. He realized that he had an opportunity to move up from this job to a better one if he did the work well. The hope of improving his prospects made him less belligerent—less irritable.

In Fort Worth he had become increasingly hard to live with. Marina's friends said he mistreated her and often humiliated her in their presence. One day Mother saw Marina with a black eye and was told that Lee had hit her. Elena Hall, and some of the others, said that Marina was sometimes to blame for his outbursts because she goaded and belittled him until he struck back. Marina herself admitted that this was often true.

I never saw him strike her, but on two or three occasions I did hear him speak to her in a tone that sounded rough to me. Since he always spoke to her in Russian, I could not understand the words, but the tone would have been harsh in any language.

After he started the new job, Lee seemed less angry—for a while. He and Marina were forced to live apart until he could afford to rent an apartment, but he telephoned her regularly, wrote letters and visited her on weekends. After a brief stay

with the Taylors in Dallas, Marina and June had moved in with Elena Hall in Fort Worth. Mrs. Hall had recently been separated from her husband and said she would like to have Marina's company. Marina stayed with her for the rest of October.

Lee lived at the YMCA for a while, then moved to a rooming house. At the end of October he found a three-room apartment at 604 Elsbeth Street and telephoned Marina to tell her about it. The following weekend, on Sunday, November 4, Lee and Marina moved their clothes, dishes, and the few pieces of furniture they had, from Mrs. Hall's house in Fort Worth to the apartment on Elsbeth Street, with the help of some Russian friends.

For the first week or two, Marina seemed to feel that their relationship had improved. She described it as a relatively happy time. "In our spare time we walked in the park and around the city, visiting our Russian friends. In the evening Lee went two or three times a week to an evening school in Dallas—studying typing. I thought that this would be useful. But he did not finish the course, since he got tired of it."

The peaceful family life was short-lived. One day Marina mentioned to the landlady that she was from Russia and the landlady seemed surprised. Lee had told her that his wife was Czechoslovakian. Marina was angry at Lee for lying about her nationality and Lee was angry at Marina for exposing his lie. The quarrel grew more and more bitter until Marina took June and went to a Russian friend's house, telling Lee she was leaving him for good.

After a few days, Lee telephoned Marina and begged her to come home. She refused. But when he went to see her and apologized she forgave him. For the first time, she said, she saw him cry. "What woman's heart can resist this," she said, "especially if she is in love?"

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I am convinced that Marina was in love with Lee—and she understood him perhaps better than anyone else who knew him. She wrote later:

Then I felt that this man is very unhappy and that he cannot love in any other way. All of this, including the quarrels, mean love in his language. I saw that if I did not go back to him, things would be very hard for him. Lee was not particularly open with me about his feelings, and always wore a mask. Then I felt for the first time that this person was not born to live among people, that among them he was alone. I was sorry for him and frightened. I was afraid that if I did not go back to him something might happen. I didn't have anything concrete in mind, but my intuition told me that I couldn't do this. Not because I am anything special, but I knew that he needed me. I went back to Lee.

Marina seemed to accept Lee's many moods, with gratitude for the happy moments and resignation for the quarrels. "When we were not quarreling," she wrote, "I was very happy with my Lee. He helped me with the housework, and took care of June. He devoted a great deal of time to June. He also read a great deal. He used to bring home dozens of books from the library and just swallowed them down, even reading at night."

Marina also noticed something about Lee that I had observed when he was a child, in the days of *Let's Pretend*. She said:

Sometimes it seemed to me that he was living in another world which he had constructed for himself, and that he came down to earth only to go to work, to earn money for his family, to eat, and to sleep. Perhaps this is not true, but in my opinion he had two lives, spending most of his time in his own separate life. Previously, in Russia, I had not noticed this, since he was not so withdrawn.

Meanwhile, Vada and I decided to plan a family reunion for Thanksgiving Day, November 22. John Pic and his family

had returned to the United States from Japan a few months earlier and were now living in San Antonio. He and Lee hadn't seen each other in nearly ten years, since that unhappy year in New York. I had kept up with both brothers and usually passed along the news from one to the other, but Lee and John had not even exchanged letters during this time. Now, with all of us in Texas, it seemed like a good time to bring them together again—for all of us to be together with our wives and children.

I didn't invite Mother to the gathering. We wanted to be sure it would be a happy meeting for everybody, with no bitterness or unhappy reminders.

I wrote to Lee and asked if he and Marina could come. His reply, dated November 17, was postmarked the next day:

DEAR ROBERT:

In answer to your kind invitation for Thanksgiving, we'd love to come and we'll be in Fort Worth Thanksgiving morning. We shall come by bus and I'll give you a ring on the phone from the bus station (about 9:00-10:00).

See you soon,  
LEE

On Thanksgiving morning, John and I went down to the bus station to meet Lee and Marina and June. They seemed gay and cheerful, giving us no hint of the trouble they had been having. Marina wrote about that day later as one of the happiest days of that year. They were laughing a lot and showed us some silly pictures they had taken in one of those coin-operated photo booths in the station.

John and Lee had a lot to talk about, after ten years. They exchanged stories about their experiences in Japan, but Lee didn't mention Russia. We didn't bring it up either. It just seemed better to wait for Lee to volunteer whatever he wanted to say about it. He said nothing.

We didn't mention Mother, either. Lee may have told John

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that he and Marina had seen Mother and lived with her for a while, but there was no discussion.

It was a good day for all of us, happy and relaxed, the way a family holiday ought to be. Vada and Margie and Marina were busy in the kitchen while John and Lee and I talked in the living room and played with the children. We took some color movies that day.

We had dinner late in the afternoon and sat around the table for about two hours. Just before dark, Lee and Marina began to get ready to go back to Dallas. John offered to take them to the bus station, but they said they wanted to telephone Paul Gregory before leaving Fort Worth.

Paul drove over, but he didn't stay more than a few minutes. He said he would drive them to the station. When we all said good-bye at the door, I thought Lee seemed a little tense. I wondered why, then decided maybe he felt it was the end of a good day—and now he would go back to the everyday drag.

That was the last time I saw Lee, until November 23, 1963.



## Part Three: *Aftermath*



## *Chapter Eight*

AFTER returning to the Statler-Hilton late on the night of November 22, 1963, I spent about six hours in the uncomfortable rollaway bed, but I never did fall asleep. I went down to the lobby early on Saturday morning and waited for the drugstore to open. I hadn't brought a comb or a toothbrush with me from Denton, so I bought a comb and some hair oil and went back up to my room to comb my hair. Instead of buying a razor and shaving cream, I decided I would wait until the hotel barbershop opened and then go in there for a shave.

There were two barbers in the shop, and they began discussing the assassination. Obviously neither of them had any idea that I was Lee's brother.

One of the barbers had already made up his mind. He was certain that Lee had killed the President, and said that he should be executed immediately.

"Now, wait a minute," said the barber who was shaving me. "He may be guilty, or he may not. The only way to find out is to give him a fair trial."

I said nothing, but I was so pleased by my barber's refusal to join in the cry for a lynching that I tipped him fifty cents.

Since I was still finding it impossible to get in to see the police chief, Jesse Curry, or Captain Fritz, I decided to talk to

the district attorney, Henry Wade. He was not quite as busy that Saturday morning as Curry and Fritz, and I did spend a few minutes in his office with him and one of his assistants, Jim Bowie.

Wade told me about the pistol the police had found on Lee when he was arrested, and I then asked him some questions about the shooting of the police officer, J. D. Tippit. He said there were several eyewitnesses to that shooting, and told me that their testimony had convinced him that Lee was guilty of that charge.

He then began talking about the trial on the charge of assassinating the President. "This is not going to be tried in a Federal court," he said. "It will be held in a county court. The Federal authorities have no jurisdiction over the case, even though it does involve the President of the United States."

After a few minutes, Wade began questioning me. When and where had I last seen Lee? I told him that I had last seen him just about a year before at my home in Fort Worth. Wade asked a number of other questions, then said casually, "Now, let's see, you last saw Lee . . ." He repeated much of what I had told him a few moments earlier, but changed a detail or two slightly, trying to trip me up. I understood immediately what he was attempting to do, and the trick seemed so obvious that I just smiled at him. After he saw that I wasn't going to be taken in by this, he relaxed, and we talked easily about some other things that had nothing to do with Lee or the assassination.

While we were talking, one of Wade's assistants came in and handed me a note requesting that I call my mother at RI-7-6411, Extension 906.

I made the call, and Mother told me that she and Marina and the children were now in a suite at the Hotel Adolphus.

### *Aftermath*

A *Life* reporter had found them at Ruth Paine's house in Irving late Friday night and had offered to take them into Dallas and to arrange for them to stay at a hotel near the jail, so they could get to the jail quickly if word came that they would be permitted to see Lee.

Now, Mother told me, she had talked to Captain Fritz and he said that Marina, Mother and I would be allowed to see Lee at the jail about noon.

I told her that I would come over to the Adolphus after I finished my discussion with the district attorney, and we could then all go over to the jail together.

When I returned to Wade's office, he talked a little while longer about the case against Lee and told me who would have jurisdiction in the case and what the next steps would be.

The whole meeting with Wade seemed rather strange to me. My strongest impression of the district attorney was that he was just a plain politician. After that first blundering effort to trick me, he talked as though he had just one thought in the back of his mind: that I would be voting in future elections, and it might be useful to make sure that I would come away from our meeting with a friendly impression of him.

It was about 11 A.M. when I reached Room 906 at the Adolphus.

A man came to the door as soon as I knocked and said, "Yes?"

I hesitated, since I didn't know who he was. Then I said, "I'm Robert Oswald. Is my mother here?"

"In the next room," he said. "Just come on through."

I passed through a room occupied by some reporters and photographers from *Life* magazine, who had already installed a teletype machine.

In the next room I found Mother, Marina, the children, a middle-aged woman who was serving as an interpreter, and an FBI agent named Bardwell (Brad) Odum.

I was not surprised to find that Mother was in the middle of an argument with Odum. The FBI agent wanted to ask Marina some questions, but Mother had intervened.

"I'm not going to let Marina say anything to anybody, and that's final," Mother said, her voice getting louder and louder.

Odum tried to bypass Mother by getting his request to Marina through the interpreter, but when the interpreter attempted to talk to Marina, Mother interrupted. Odum realized that he would have to use some other way of getting his message through, and he evidently decided that I might be able to help him. After making one or two brief remarks to me there in the hotel room, he said, "Come on out here for a minute, Robert."

As soon as we were safely out of Mother's hearing, the agent said, "You seem to be a sensible guy. All we want is a yes or no from Marina herself, not from your mother. Could you help us?"

"All right," I said. "I understand what you want. I'll try to get Marina to say what she wants to do. But I don't think she should answer any more questions right now. Either you or the Dallas police questioned her last night, and I don't know what transpired then. I think perhaps she should have an attorney from here on, but I'm not going to try to speak for her. I'll find out just what she wants to do."

Brad Odum and I walked back into the room. I held out my hand before Mother could get started again. "Now, wait a minute—let me handle this," I said to her. Then I spoke quietly to Marina. She listened, and then gave her own answer to the FBI: *Nyet*.

Odum was obviously disappointed by her answer, but I told him that she was upset and had been under a great strain. I was sure she would cooperate with the FBI once things had settled down a little, I said. He gave me a card with his tele-

phone number and asked that I telephone him when Marina felt like answering some questions.

We reached the Dallas jail about 11:45, and were told that we would have a short wait before the necessary passes would be ready. I spent about half an hour talking to Mike Howard of the Secret Service.

"We're interested in everything we can possibly find out about your brother," Mike said. "Would you mind answering a few questions?"

"I'll do my best to answer anything I can," I said.

We then covered about the same ground the FBI and the district attorney had gone over before.

Finally, about 1:30, a police officer brought down passes for Mother and Marina.

"Where's mine?" I asked.

"These are the only ones they gave me," the officer said.

"Well, I'm sure as heck supposed to see him, and I'm going to," I said.

"You'll have to take that up with somebody else."

Mike Howard cut in. "We'll see what we can do for you," he told me.

My mother had been listening to the conversation, and now she said, "Here, you take mine. I won't go."

"No, you all go on up there," I said. "I'll see him later on."

They went up to see Lee, and I continued my talk with Mike Howard.

"Do you think Lee shot at Governor Connally because of the resentment about the dishonorable discharge from the Marine Corps?" Mike asked me.

"I don't think that was the motive," I said. I told Mike I had never heard Lee express any strong resentment against Connally, and I also told him about the letter Lee had received

notifying him that Fred Korth had succeeded Connally as Secretary of the Navy.

As I told Mike something about Mother and Lee, he said that these personal details would be of special interest to Mrs. Kennedy. I don't know whether he meant me to understand that Mrs. Kennedy herself had requested this kind of information, but that is the way I interpreted his remarks.

Because I thought that Mike Howard himself might be the one who would be giving Mrs. Kennedy this background information about the Oswald family, I started rather formally expressing the sympathy I felt for her and for the President's children.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express to Mrs. Kennedy, through you . . ." I began, and then my voice broke.

"That's all right," Mike said. "I know what you are trying to say."

After a while, Mike's partner, Charlie Kunkel, came in. He said he had been trying to reach Captain Fritz by telephone to check on my pass to see Lee, but had not had any luck. Kunkel told Mike that he would go upstairs now to see if he could find Fritz.

Kunkel hadn't been gone long before Secret Service Inspector Tom Kelley came by. I had not met Kelley before, but Mike Howard told the inspector that I was being cooperative and answering all his questions.

"I'm just as anxious as anyone to learn the reason behind the assassination, and to discover whether anyone else is involved," I told Kelley.

After I said that, Kelley suddenly seemed eager to see that I had a chance to talk to Lee without any further delay. He sent Mike Howard upstairs to help Charlie Kunkel arrange for a pass for me.

By this time I was hungry. I knew there were some candy

### *Aftermath*

and coke machines down the hall, and I told Kelley I would like to go down there and get a bite to eat.

"Wait a minute," he said, as I started toward the door. "Let me go. I don't want you out there with all those reporters. I'm sure you don't want to fight that."

"It doesn't make any difference," I said. "They're not going to get anything out of me."

I had learned something about dealing with newspapermen earlier that day. While I was waiting outside District Attorney Wade's office, one of the reporters who had gathered there tried to interview me. I told him immediately that I had really nothing at all to say to the press, but evidently he had been taught to be persistent.

"Now, your name is Robert Oswald, isn't it?" he asked me.

That seemed a reasonable enough question, and I said, "That's right."

He apparently felt that he knew how to handle me, and began easing his way into the story.

"You're twenty-nine years old?" he said.

"You see what I mean?" I said. "One question leads to another. Let's stop right there." And he did.

But Inspector Kelley insisted on protecting me from the press. It took him about fifteen minutes to push his way through the mob outside, and another fifteen to get back, but he returned with some peanut-butter cookies and a cold drink.

The pass for me had not arrived when the inspector returned. He checked several more times, and finally told me, "Okay, we've got it."

Kelley and a Dallas police officer led me out to the elevator, and we all headed up to the floor where Lee was then being kept. When we got off the elevator, they motioned to me to go through a door into a long, narrow room, and said that Lee would be there in a minute or two.

Neither Kelley nor the Dallas police officer followed me into the room. I would have been alone for a moment except for one persistent photographer who planted himself in the open doorway and trained his portable motion-picture camera on me. He was absolutely expressionless and didn't say a word to me—just kept grinding away, obviously concerned only with the job of getting as much motion-picture footage as he could to sell to the television networks.

The room was rectangular, and heavy glass separated it into two halves—one for prisoners and the other for visitors. On each side of the glass, rounded-off plywood was used to form eight or nine cubicles. There were no chairs on either side of the room, but in each of the cubicles there was a shelf and a telephone.

The room was warm and the stale air seemed absolutely still. Over the years thousands of visitors had entered the door I came through, and had waited there in that drab room for the arrival of the prisoners they were visiting. The floor was tired and worn, and the heavy glass that divided the room into two parts was dusty and grimy.

The only sound I could hear was the whirring of the camera. When Lee entered through the steel-barred doorway, I could not hear the clank of metal against metal as the door opened and closed.

I did not see him at the instant he came in, because I had not been expecting him to enter at that point. A policeman had undoubtedly opened and closed the door through which Lee came, but the policeman had disappeared before I looked in that direction.

I was conscious suddenly that Lee was walking toward me at something of an angle. He was not hurrying at all, just strolling in my direction at a normal pace.

As he entered the cubicle opposite the one I had chosen, we

### *Aftermath*

looked at each other through the streaked glass. Lee motioned to me to pick up the telephone in my cubicle, and he spoke into the one in the opposite cubicle. His voice was calm as he said: "This is taped."

I realized that he meant our conversation was being recorded by the Dallas police, and that we should watch what we said to each other.

"Well, it may be or may not be," I answered. I leaned forward, resting my elbows on the shelf, and took a close look at him. He had a cut over one eye and a bruise or wound of some kind on one cheek. It had been treated with something—possibly iodine or Mercurochrome.

I knew about the scuffle at the Texas Theatre, but I had not heard about the cut and the bruise. "What have they been doing to you?" I asked him. "Were they roughing you up?"

I knew that the Dallas police sometimes treated prisoners fairly roughly.

"I got this at the theatre," he said. "They haven't bothered me since. They're treating me all right."

I still remember how completely relaxed he seemed, as though all of the frenzied activity there in the Dallas jail and all over the United States had nothing whatever to do with him. His voice was calm and he talked matter-of-factly, without any sign of tension or strain, as though we were discussing a moderately interesting minor incident at his office or my office.

No one had told me how long I would be allowed to talk to Lee, and I did not plunge in by asking the one question I most wanted answered. Instead, he and I talked casually about a few personal things.

He mentioned the earlier visit by Mother and Marina, and then he asked, "What did you think of the baby?"

"Yeah," I said, "thanks a lot for telling me about the baby. I didn't even know you had one."

He smiled at my sarcasm.

"Well," he said, "it was a girl, and I wanted a boy, but you know how that goes."

That was a strange echo of the words my brother John said to me the day we were at Aunt Lillian's house waiting for word whether the new baby our mother was expecting was a boy or a girl.

After a little more talk about the baby and Marina, I finally asked him bluntly, "Lee, what the Sam Hill is going on?"

"I don't know," he said.

"You don't know? Look, they've got your pistol, they've got your rifle, they've got you charged with shooting the President and a police officer. And you tell me you don't know. Now, I want to know just what's going on."

He stiffened and straightened up, and his facial expression was suddenly very tight.

"I just don't know what they're talking about," he said, firmly and deliberately. "Don't believe all this so-called evidence."

I was studying his face closely, trying to find the answer to my question in his eyes or his expression. He realized that, and as I stared into his eyes, he said to me quietly, "Brother, you won't find anything there."

Then, more relaxed, he began talking about Marina again.

"Well, what about Marina?" I asked him. "What do you think she's going to do now, with those two kids?"

"My friends will take care of them," he said.

"Do you mean the Paines?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, indicating by his reaction that he was a little surprised that I knew of the Paines.

Although I had met them for the first time the previous night at the Dallas police station, I already had strong reser-

### *Aftermath*

vations about Michael and Ruth Paine—particularly about Michael.

"I don't think they're any friends of yours," I said.

"Yes, they are."

"Well, they're sure not any friends of mine."

It was obvious that we could not reach agreement about the Paines, and he changed the subject.

"Junie needs a new pair of shoes," he said.

I had noticed on Friday night that one of the red tennis shoes his little girl was wearing was just about worn through at the toe. This was on his mind, and during Mother and Marina's visit he had asked Marina to be sure to buy Junie some new shoes.

"Don't worry about that," I said. "I'll take care of that."

A Secret Service man had mentioned to me earlier that Lee had been attempting to reach an attorney named John Abt, whose name then meant nothing at all to me.

"What about this attorney you tried to contact in New York?" I asked. "Who is he?"

"Well, he's just an attorney I want to handle my case."

"I'll get you an attorney down here."

"No," he said, "you stay out of it."

"Stay out of it? It looks like I've been dragged into it."

"I'm not going to have anybody from down here," he said very firmly. "I want this one."

"Well, all right."

After a few more words, a police officer came into the other side of the room and walked over and tapped Lee on the shoulder. That was all the time we could have, he told Lee.

I was surprised and disappointed at the interruption. I had been there no more than ten minutes, maybe even less, and it seemed to me that we were just beginning to reach the point of talking freely and easily to each other. I still had many ques-

tions I wanted to ask him, and I felt that after some further probing I would know firmly in my own mind whether or not Lee had assassinated the President and then killed Tippit. Even if he was guilty, I would not expect him to say flatly, "They are right, Robert. I am guilty." But it is conceivable that he had made up his mind that the assassination was necessary for some reason that was adequate to him, and that he would have wanted to make that motive clear to someone—and I was closer to Lee than anyone else. If I had been allowed to spend half an hour with Lee that Saturday and then continue our talk over the next day or two, I believe I would have been able to arrive at final answers to two questions: Was Lee guilty? If he was guilty, what were his motives?

Unfortunately, the police officer had his own instructions, and he waited impatiently for the final exchange between me and Lee.

"I'll see you in a day or two," I said.

"Now, you've got your job and everything," Lee told me. "Don't be running back and forth all the time and getting yourself in trouble with your boss."

"Don't worry about that," I said. "I'll be back."

"All right," Lee said. "I'll see you."

Those were the last words he ever said to me.

## *Chapter Nine*

INSPECTOR Kelley had been waiting just outside the room during my talk with Lee. As soon as I came out, he and I stepped into the elevator to go back down to the third floor. The photographer, concentrating entirely on his opportunity to get film footage that no one else would have, pushed his way into the elevator with us, still grinding away.

"What did he say?" Inspector Kelley asked me.

"Let's wait until we're downstairs," I said. I didn't want to give any help at all to the persistent and annoying photographer who had treated me and Lee as though we were animals in a zoo.

We got off at the third floor and walked back to the office where Mike Howard and I had been talking earlier. The inspector asked me to reconstruct my exchange with Lee word for word, as closely as I could remember. I spent about forty-five minutes there, going over the entire conversation slowly and carefully, while it was still fresh and vivid.

When the inspector and Mike Howard felt they understood exactly what had gone on in the room upstairs, I told them I would like to drive out to the farm where Vada and the children were staying with Vada's parents.

"Where is that?" Mike asked.

### *LEE—Part Three*

"If I told you, you still wouldn't know where it is," I said. "It's close to Boyd, Texas."

Many people who have spent all their lives in that part of Texas have never heard of Boyd, but Mike said immediately, "I know where that is." It turned out that he was raised just a few miles from Boyd.

I left the police station about 4:30 and went over to the Adolphus, hoping to see Mother and Marina before driving to the farm. But when I knocked on the door of their suite, a *Life* photographer told me they had moved to the Executive Inn Motel, out near Love Field. I telephoned from the room there at the Adolphus, but there was no answer.

The *Life* people were much more considerate than the photographer I had run into at the jail. They knew I did not want to be interviewed, and they asked me no questions at all. They had some sandwiches there in the room and offered me one. I had eaten nothing since breakfast except the cookies the inspector brought me, so I accepted. Then I thanked them and left for the farm.

Vada and I found some toys for the children to play with in the living room, and then we went back into the kitchen to talk with Vada's mother and father. We all felt that someone might try to take revenge on Lee by harming me, Vada or the children, and we also realized that the children could be deeply disturbed by news reports—particularly those on television which showed Lee under arrest. For the time being, the farm seemed to offer the greatest security for Vada and the children. I always felt, however unrealistically, that I could take care of myself, and I decided that I would drive to the Executive Inn Motel Sunday morning to see how Mother, Marina, Junie and Rachel were getting along.

### *Aftermath*

I reached Fort Worth about ten o'clock Sunday, but I wasn't sure how to get to the Executive Inn Motel. I called Mike Howard at his home and asked for directions.

Mike suggested that I meet him and Charlie Kunkel at a Howard Johnson's about halfway between Fort Worth and Dallas, and said we could then go on to the motel together. Mike, Charlie and Peter Gregory, a Russian-born friend of Lee and Marina, were waiting at the Howard Johnson's when I arrived about half an hour after making the call. Mr. Gregory told me that Mother had called him and had told him that she and Marina couldn't get any rest at all because reporters and other people were disturbing them. Mike said he thought it would be a good idea if I made some arrangements to get Mother and Marina off someplace where they could escape from newspapermen, television reporters, and people who were merely curious about Lee's mother and his wife.

We talked about this over coffee at Howard Johnson's, then Mike and Charlie got into their car and Mr. Gregory and I into mine. Mike and Charlie led the way to the Executive Inn.

My first thought was that Mother was exaggerating everything again. I saw no sign at all that she and Marina were under siege from reporters. In fact, they seemed kind of lonely. But since they did not like the motel, I felt we should take them out to the farm that belonged to my wife's parents.

Just as I reached my car with some of their things, Mike Howard came over and said, "Now, don't get excited, Robert, but we've just gotten word that Lee's been shot. It isn't serious, and they've captured the man who shot him."

Mike's own calmness made me feel that Lee would be all right.

"Where are they taking him?" I asked.

"Parkland Hospital."

After they had given me a few seconds to absorb the news, Charlie asked me, "What do you want to do now?"

"I believe I'll go to Parkland," I said. "But I wish you'd take Mother and Marina and the children on to the farm."

Charlie said that perhaps Marina should be there at Parkland with me.

"No, I don't think that would be best," I said. "I'll find out how serious it is and let you know then."

I felt certain that we now faced a period of violent revenge, and I did not want Mother, Marina, or the children to be exposed to that danger. I asked Mike and Charlie not to tell Mother and Marina what had happened. If they knew, I was sure they would insist on going on to Parkland with me.

I myself had only Mike's vague report to go by, and as a result I received a very confused idea of what had happened. Since the police had told me late Saturday that they planned to transfer Lee to the Dallas County Jail that night, I assumed that they had followed that schedule. When I heard about the shooting Sunday morning around 11:30, I thought a sniper had fired into Lee's cell at the county jail from the street. Since the county jail is exposed to the street, while the police headquarters building where Lee had been kept Friday and Saturday seemed much easier to safeguard, I found my early vague conception of what had happened easier to accept than the facts I later learned.

The police and the Secret Service men at Parkland were not expecting me, and at first they seemed a little uncertain about whether I should be admitted. Two Secret Service agents questioned me for perhaps ten minutes while I was still in my car, then said, "Well, all right, let's go on in."

Three or four Dallas police officers were standing near the door when we entered, and they examined the identification

### *Aftermath*

card of one of the Secret Service men. Before we actually entered the hospital, one of the agents said, "Robert, do you mind?" and began to frisk me.

"No," I said. Looking back now, it does seem a little strange that I was searched for a weapon while on the way to visit my injured brother, while Jack Ruby made his way into the basement of the Dallas jail without being asked a single question, but I did not stop then to analyze the situation, and I felt no resentment because the Secret Service man knew nothing about me.

While we were waiting to be told where we could go to get a report on Lee's condition, one reporter walked up to me. He was a little taller than I am, a dark man with very dark hair and eyebrows. He came very close to me and stood there for perhaps thirty seconds or even a minute, staring at me very intently, not saying a word. I stared back at him, waiting for him to ask me a question, but he finally turned around and walked off. I never found out who he was.

Still confused about where Lee had been at the time of the shooting and with no information at all about the man who had fired at him, I waited in a room on the first floor for some news from the doctors. I was told that Lee had been taken up to the second or third floor.

One of the Secret Service agents came into the room where I was waiting and said, "Robert, he's going to be all right. Don't worry about it."

This was the first clear report I had heard since I had learned of the shooting, and it sounded so authentic and reassuring that I relaxed there in the chair. Another Secret Service agent, John Howlett, and I talked quietly for another ten or fifteen minutes. The telephone rang, and Howlett picked up the receiver. He listened intently for perhaps thirty seconds or so, and then he said, "Would you repeat that?"

I watched him closely, struck by something in the tone of his voice. After another few seconds, Howlett put the telephone down and stood up, then started walking around the desk toward me.

"Robert," he said, "I'm sorry, but he's dead."

I slumped back into the chair and put my hand to my face. I felt as though a heavy weight were pressing me down into the chair.

Three or four other agents who apparently had just received the same news came into the room. One of them told me that the hospital chaplain was in the next room, and asked whether I would like to see him. I nodded, and the chaplain came in. We talked quietly for a moment, and then we prayed together.

While I was still talking to the chaplain, Secret Service Inspector Kelley came barging in.

"Well, what do you expect?" he said to me. "Violence breeds violence."

"Inspector," I said, "does that justify anything?"

He left the room without answering.

A little later the agents asked me if I wished to view Lee's body. I nodded, and they led the way. My feet were so heavy that I found it difficult to lift them, and the agents stopped to wait for me as I moved slowly, shuffling my way down the long hallway.

Lee's death had increased the Secret Service's early concern about the possibility of other members of the family being shot or harmed in some way. Mike Howard told me that some FBI men were on the way to the hospital to offer me protection, and that others would be guarding Mother, Marina and the children. "They'll take over now," he said. All the Secret Service men there at Parkland seemed to be preparing to turn the responsibility over to the FBI, but then there was an abrupt

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change in the plans which I did not understand until later. The expected FBI men did not appear. Mike told me that we were to remain under the protection of the Secret Service men for a while longer, and would all be leaving soon for a new hideaway.

I did not know then that Mother and Marina had been brought to Parkland shortly after I left them at the Executive Inn. They had been waiting in another room, and were now asked to get into a car with some Secret Service agents. I was told to get in a second Secret Service car, but was not informed of our destination.

As the two cars pulled out, the reporters who had been standing by at Parkland noticed all this activity at the back entrance of the hospital. They didn't know what was going on, but several of them jumped into two taxicabs and tried to catch up with the Secret Service cars to find out.

For a while it looked as though the reporters might succeed. The Secret Service men were driving at top speed, but the two cabs were close behind us. Then one of the agents in the second car—the one I was riding in—radioed the Dallas police and asked for assistance. He didn't go into much detail, but he asked the police to overtake two taxicabs loaded with reporters and to arrest the drivers for speeding or some other traffic violation.

Probably no more than five minutes passed between the time the Secret Service agent made his request and the time three or four Dallas police cars appeared. They roared up behind the cabs, forced the drivers off to the side of the road, and either arrested them or frightened them into giving up the chase. That was the last we saw of those reporters.

A little later, we drew up at our destination: the Inn of the Six Flags. The inn is occupied several months of each year by people who come to see the "Six Flags Over Texas" exhibition,

but on November 24 it was deserted. We were all taken back to the most isolated part of the inn and were told that the Secret Service had taken over Rooms 423 and 424 for Mother, Marina, the children, myself, and the agents who would be guarding us.

Apparently the Secret Service agents did not know just what was going to happen next. Some still believed that we were to be turned over to the FBI within the next few hours or the next few days, but others indicated that we would remain under Secret Service protection.

I soon realized that the Secret Service itself was going to be working on something in the Dallas area for a while. New agents were turning up at the inn every few minutes. Some had flown in from Washington, some from California, and several from other parts of the United States. The inn seemed to be serving now as a kind of regional headquarters for the agency.

We had been at the inn about three or four hours when Mike Howard received definite word about the change in plans. Around five o'clock, after a telephone call from Inspector Kelley, Mike told me, "Robert, it looks like we are going to take care of Marina and your mother." Then he added: "I'm going to have to ask for clarification of that. It seems to me that they're overlooking you."

Mike checked back with Inspector Kelley, who apparently then called someone in higher authority in Washington.

"They've talked to the President," Mike told me later, "and he has expressed concern for you and the entire family. So has the Attorney General."

I was particularly struck by Mike's final words. I wondered that week and have often wondered since whether Robert Kennedy was concerned simply because he was the Attorney Gen-

eral of the United States and had some official responsibility for our protection, or whether the human being behind that title—Robert Kennedy himself—in these hours of his own deep grief was genuinely, personally concerned about the safety of the mother, wife, brother and children of the man accused of assassinating his brother.

Within an hour after our arrival, the inn was like an armed camp. Two men were walking around the perimeter carrying carbines, and one was stationed full time in the area between the main entrance to the inn and the door that would admit people to the area in which we were to stay.

“All we need is to have one more of you killed or injured, and we’re in real trouble,” one of the agents said to me.

We felt completely cut off from the outside world. We were not allowed to see newspapers, listen to the radio, or watch television that Sunday afternoon or Sunday night.

I mentioned to Mike Howard that I had left my car at Parkland.

“Don’t worry about it,” Mike said. “The Dallas police are keeping it under surveillance.”

Then he suggested that Bob Parsons and I could go over to pick up the car and bring it back to the inn, but I didn’t feel like driving.

“Well, we’ll take care of it,” Mike said. I gave the Secret Service agents my car keys and told them where I had parked it.

Later Bob Parsons and one of the Secret Service men went over to Parkland and spent enough time in the area to make sure that the car wasn’t being watched by reporters who might be waiting for me to lead them to our hideout. After a few minutes, without saying anything to the Dallas police, Bob and the agent got into the car and drove it to the Arlington

police station. It was hidden there for a while, and later moved to the garage at a policeman's home, ready for my use when I wanted it.

Parsons came back to the inn that night and said to me, "Well, we stole the car." Then he telephoned the Dallas police to tell them what had happened to that car they were watching.

Marina, Mother and the children were in one bedroom at the inn, and I was in a very large adjoining bedroom which I shared with Charlie Kunkel and Bob Parsons.

Despite our complete isolation from all sources of news, I began to realize that there was some difficulty between the Secret Service and the FBI. I heard the agents talking among themselves about this (using their nickname for the FBI agents, "the Feebies") and they seemed as puzzled by this development as I was. They knew that they were now carrying out an assignment that would be more logically turned over to the FBI, and they were speculating over the reason for the absence of FBI men at Parkland and at the inn. One agent said, "Maybe the Feebies don't know where we are."

Gradually the reports and rumors from various sources seemed to fit together. As early as Friday night I had heard some speculation about the possibility of a conspiracy behind the assassination of the President, and during my long drive on Friday night I had wondered whether Marina herself might be a part of such a conspiracy. On Saturday and Sunday there were rumors in Dallas that the "conspiracy" might involve some government agency. By Sunday night I realized that the agency under greatest suspicion was the FBI.

Soon after my talk with Mike Howard about the Secret Service remaining in charge of our protection, I received a call from Parkland Hospital. Someone there asked me, "What is to be done with your brother's body?"

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During the rush to the inn and the surprising developments of the afternoon, I had had no chance to think about funeral arrangements for Lee.

"Mike," I said to Mike Howard, "as long as I've lived in Fort Worth, I don't know the names of any funeral homes here. Could you help me out?"

"Sure," Mike said.

He happened to know the director of the Miller Funeral Home well, and after he placed the call the funeral director merely asked me, "What kind of casket do you want?"

I told him I wasn't interested in an elaborate casket, but that I did want a heavy steel outer vault which would be safe from vandals.

The funeral director understood immediately what I had in mind, and assured me he could take care of the other details as soon as Lee's body was released to him by the hospital.

Because of the nature of Lee's death, this was not a simple matter to arrange. I suppose the authorities at Parkland were afraid that someone who was either vengeful or mentally unbalanced might use some trick to try to obtain possession of Lee's body. When a Secret Service man called the hospital to ask that the body be released to the undertaker I had chosen, the hospital spokesman said they could do nothing until they had some confirmation that the order was genuine.

A rather elaborate method of checking the authenticity of the order was then worked out by the hospital. The spokesman said that Parkland would send a message to the Dallas police department, giving a secret password. The Dallas police would then contact the Secret Service agents at the inn. The agents would in turn tell me what the password was, and I was to telephone the hospital, saying only the one word to the person who answered.

We waited while the first calls were placed—from the hos-

pital to the police, from the police to the Secret Service. Then I was told to dial a particular number at the hospital and say the word "Malcolm." (That was the first name of the doctor who had tried to save President Kennedy's life on Friday and had attempted to save Lee's life on Sunday.) When I reached the hospital number and said "Malcolm" the man who answered said, "All right."

This had been settled easily and, despite the roundabout message system, had not taken much time. But from that moment on, every step was both time-consuming and disturbing.

The funeral director began telephoning various cemeteries to prepare the way for me to buy a burial plot for Lee. One cemetery after another refused even to discuss the possibility of accepting Lee's body. The first cemetery the funeral director checked with at least gave a reason for the refusal which I could understand. It was part of a group of cemeteries, he said, and Officer Tippit was to be buried in one of the associated cemeteries. While I might have argued that few people would even be conscious of the connection between the two cemeteries, at least that one man gave some semblance of a reason. The others were so vague in their comments that neither the funeral director, Mike Howard, nor I felt that they were acting out of any motive other than prejudice.

While the funeral director was kind enough to continue that search, I began telephoning various ministers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, to request that they officiate at the burial services. I had been surprised by the earlier difficulties with the cemetery officials, but I was astonished by the reactions of the ministers I talked to. The first one, the second one, the third one, and the fourth one flatly refused even to consider my request.

One of the ministers, a prominent member of the Greater

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Dallas Council of Churches, listened impatiently to my request and then said sharply, "No, we just can't do that."

"Why not?" I asked.

"We just can't go along with what you have in mind," he said. (All I had in mind was the simplest kind of funeral service.) And then the minister added: "Your brother was a sinner."

I hung up. The question of who would officiate at Lee's funeral was still unsettled when I went to bed Sunday night, although the time of the funeral had been set for four o'clock Monday afternoon.

When my mother saw a picture of Jack Ruby in a newspaper on Monday morning, she brought the paper over to me.

She whispered to me, "This is the same man the FBI showed me a picture of on Saturday night."

I didn't wait for her to say any more. "All right, Mother," I said. "If that is so, don't tell me. Tell the Secret Service man right over there."

If the FBI had actually shown Mother a photograph of Jack Ruby hours before Ruby shot Lee, I felt certain the Secret Service agents who were there with us in the inn would see to it that a report on this episode reached the proper authorities. But I myself could not take her words seriously. I was convinced that she was deluding herself about this, as she had so often deluded herself about mysterious conspiracies.

A little later that morning, while I was still trying to find a minister to preside at Rose Hill Cemetery, Marina heard someone say that the funeral service for President Kennedy was being shown on television. She told me quietly that she would like to watch the service, and I went over and turned on the television set in the large room where I was staying with the officers and Secret Service men.

As we waited for the sound to begin, one of the Secret Service agents said, "Robert, I don't think you all should watch this," and leaned down to turn off the set.

"No," Marina said firmly, "I watch."

The agent had not been trying to censor what we could see, but had merely felt that Marina would find it upsetting to watch the somber ceremony. When she insisted, he left us undisturbed.

We had been watching perhaps half an hour when I received a call from the chaplain at Parkland, asking whether all the arrangements for the funeral had been completed. I told him about the reactions of the other ministers I had talked to.

"It seems to me that there are a lot of hypocrites around," I said. "Let's examine the church's position. After all, was the assassination the act of a sane man?"

"Maybe I can convince some of the ministers by raising that question," the chaplain said. "They surely would agree that you can't hold an insane person responsible for his acts."

He telephoned several ministers and tried to persuade them that Lee should be treated in the same way as other men who had committed irrational acts, but that approach did not work either.

Finally, two Lutheran ministers who seemed sympathetic appeared at the Inn of the Six Flags about eleven o'clock Monday morning. One stayed in the lobby, but the other came back to see us. The National Council of Churches office in Dallas had asked the ministers to come out and offer to serve at the funeral service, which was now scheduled for 4 P.M. that day at the Rose Hill Cemetery.

The minister did not seem at all eager to officiate, but he did say, rather reluctantly, that he would be at the cemetery at four. Two Secret Service men who were there in the room

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with us confirmed the time and checked to be sure that the minister knew how to reach Rose Hill.

I found the long ride out to the cemetery unusually depressing because of the attitude of most of the people I had talked to in making the arrangements.

Mother, Marina and the children were in one Secret Service car, and I was in another car driven by an officer from the Tarrant County sheriff's office. A Secret Service man and Bob Parsons, of the Arlington police force, were in the car with me. Neither of the cars was marked.

We had been riding along a back road in a gloomy silence when the driver asked, "What about that car behind us?"

Parsons turned around to take a look.

"It's just two old ladies," he said, "but one of them has a burp gun."

Despite my general feeling of sadness, I laughed. I knew that Parsons was trying to shake me out of my feeling of depression.

The Fort Worth police department and the Secret Service had set up a heavy guard at Rose Hill. I could see uniformed officers stationed every few yards along the fence that surrounded the cemetery. I suppose this should have surprised me, but I was still numb from the other experiences of the previous three days.

The car bringing Mother, Marina and the children had been stopped at the main gate. After a thorough inspection, the car was allowed through, and then the gate was closed behind it. We then went through the same checkpoint.

As soon as we passed through the gate, the driver headed directly for the chapel, which was on a low hill. I saw a number of people standing quietly at the fence line, staring at the chapel and the grave, which was at the bottom of the hill.

Marina, Mother and the children went into the chapel first. I followed, accompanied by Mike Howard and Charlie Kunkel.

The chapel was completely empty. I saw no sign of any preparation for the funeral service.

"I don't understand," I said to Mike and Charlie, and they were obviously puzzled too. They said they would try to find out what had happened.

Two or three minutes later, one of them came back into the chapel, where I had been waiting.

"Well, we were a few minutes late," he said. "There's been some misunderstanding, and they've already carried the casket down to the grave site. We'll have a graveside service down there."

I had taken most of the earlier disappointments about the burial arrangements without showing my feelings, but when I heard this I hit the wall with my fist and shouted, "Damn it!"

As soon as I started out of the chapel, a photographer with a motion-picture camera came rushing toward me. I hurried toward the car, but instead of standing to one side the photographer began backing up, poking the camera as close as he could get it to my face. I was tempted for a moment to knock him down, but I managed to control my temper and in a few seconds I was in the car. Bob Parsons had noticed my reaction to the photographer. "Bob," he said, "you're doing all right, now. Just hold on."

We drove down a curved road to the grave site. Just before we reached it, one of the Secret Service men turned to Bob Parsons and said, "All right, now. You stay in the car with the carbine. If anything happens, come out shooting."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to mow down fifteen or twenty reporters," Bob said.

The Lutheran minister who had promised to be there at four had not appeared, and the Secret Service received word that he

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would not be coming out. The Reverend Louis Saunders, of the Fort Worth Council of Churches, had driven out to Rose Hill by himself just to see if he could be of any help to Marina and the family. When he was told that the other minister would not be there, the Reverend Mr. Saunders spoke the simple words of the burial service.

Just before the ceremony, the funeral director introduced me to the caretaker for Rose Hill. At the risk of his own job, the caretaker had agreed without hesitation to sell me the cemetery lot. The funeral director suggested to me that I could reduce the risk the caretaker had taken if I would respond to any inquiries about the lot in such a way as to leave the impression that the family had owned the plot for some time. Most people would then assume that the cemetery itself had had no choice—that it retained no control over this grave site and could not deny us the right to bury Lee there.

Under the circumstances, I agreed. I make the facts public now simply to pay my respects to one of the men who behaved with warmth and compassion during a period when some Christian ministers seemed more concerned over their public image than they were with their moral obligations.

While we were sitting near the grave site, waiting for the service to begin, a French reporter approached Marina and said something in Russian. Marina said a word or two in reply, but I tried to wave him away. When he continued whispering to her I stood up, and he started backing off. Then Marina turned to me and said, "He . . . says . . . sorrow." I realized then that he was not trying to interview her but was expressing sympathy to the family.

Although I had misjudged that reporter—and later learned that I had also underestimated the human feelings of some others—at that moment I was concerned by the general intrusion of newspapermen, television correspondents, and photog-

raphers at the funeral. I motioned to Mike Howard, and when he came over I told him that I planned to have the coffin opened and would like to have all reporters and spectators moved back some distance from the grave site. He nodded, and almost immediately six or eight plainclothesmen from the Fort Worth police department formed a kind of protective semicircle between us and the crowd, insuring a certain amount of privacy.

Mother, Marina, the children and I then got up and walked toward the open coffin. After I had taken a last, long look at my brother's face, I turned to go back to the place where we had been sitting. I then noticed the semicircle of plainclothesmen standing guard, solemn and stony-faced.

After the brief service ended, Mother and Marina started back toward the car that had brought them to the cemetery. I hesitated a moment, and one of the agents asked me if I wished to stay until Lee's body was lowered.

"Yes, for a few minutes," I said.

I watched as the vault cover was put over the coffin, and then waited until the gravediggers started to lower the coffin. I knew that Mother and Marina and the children were waiting in the car, so I turned then and walked back to the other car.

As we left the cemetery, we became aware of two other cars following us. Instead of heading directly toward our destination—the Inn of the Six Flags—the drivers of the cars carrying the members of the family turned in the opposite direction. We reached an expressway and headed toward the Fort Worth turnpike.

"They're still back there," someone said.

"Don't worry about it," an agent in the front seat said. "We'll take care of them."

We were approaching a toll station. The two cars carrying Mother, Marina, the children and me did not pause at the toll-

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gate. We were waved through without stopping to pay the toll, and as soon as we had passed through, the tollgate was closed. I do not know how long the cars which had tried to follow us were held up, but we did not see them again. When we reached an exit we turned and headed back to the Inn of the Six Flags.

Some time later I learned that several reporters who had been assigned to cover the story of Lee's burial had volunteered to serve as pallbearers and had carried Lee's body from the chapel to the grave site.

Because of my preoccupation with other details, I had forgotten to ask any of my friends to serve as pallbearers. I had not had time on Saturday or Sunday to follow the news reports, and this led to another oversight. I didn't realize that I had accidentally set Lee's funeral for the same day President Kennedy was being buried in Washington and Patrolman Tippit in Dallas. If I had known, I think I would have asked that Lee's burial be delayed until Tuesday. But that week I resented deeply the criticism I heard of the timing of that stark, private burial service, with my brother being carried to his grave by strangers as the curious stared down from the cemetery fence.

## *Chapter Ten*

THAT Monday night after the funeral, Mike Howard interviewed Marina at the Inn of the Six Flags. For the first time I heard her answer many questions that were also on my mind about Lee's activities of the previous twelve months.

The questioning was friendly but thorough. I was listening closely, watching for any sign that Marina was trying to dodge questions or avoid giving details, and I was impressed by her attitude and her answers. She seemed completely straightforward to me, and I was convinced by the end of the evening that she had no advance knowledge of Lee's decision to assassinate the President.

While we were still there at the inn, the Secret Service also interviewed me and Mother. My interview came first, and whenever I would begin answering a question, Mother would interrupt. She would challenge some of my statements, tell the Secret Service that she knew more about Lee's life and activities than I did, and insist that they stop wasting their time with me and instead listen to her.

When the Secret Service did begin questioning her, she gave long, rambling answers. I sometimes found it difficult to listen to her and got up and left the room during a couple of her diatribes.

I tried to avoid interrupting her at first, but when I heard

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some of her wilder remarks I could not remain quiet. She was creating great confusion in the minds of the agents, and I tried to offer a few facts to bring the interview back to earth. When I did this, she screamed to the Secret Service men, charging that I was trying to prevent her from making her statement. After a few such outbursts Mike Howard took me aside and said, "Let's just humor her, Robert. Let her go ahead and say everything she has to say."

I realized that he was right, and I said no more. She talked for about two hours without interruption. Mike's extraordinary patience and his willingness to listen with apparent interest to her most irrational assertions made a favorable impression on Mother that evening. That would change, I knew, but during that long session she seemed to feel that he actually believed all of the absurd things she was saying.

At the time, I tried to convince myself that Mother's behavior could be traced to her grief over Lee's death. But as the week went on, her words grew wilder and wilder, and I couldn't pretend to take them seriously.

Mother and Marina and the children took all their meals in their room as long as they remained at the Inn of the Six Flags. I ate all of mine in the room until noon on Wednesday. That day, as Mike and one of the other Secret Service agents were about to go to the restaurant for lunch, Mike said, "Robert, if you'd like to get out of the room for a while, why don't you come on to the restaurant with us for lunch? I don't think there's any danger of anybody recognizing you. We've been watching the papers pretty closely, and in most of the pictures we've seen you're either off to one side or in the shadows."

"Fine," I said.

We went over to the main dining room at the inn, which was still in full operation. There weren't many customers in

the restaurant. We found a table near the center of the room, and I happened to take a seat facing away from the entrance.

We ordered, and while we were waiting for our lunch to be served one of the agents said quietly, "Robert, don't turn around."

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Oh, no," the other agent said.

A long line of newspaper photographers and television photographers had entered the main restaurant. As we waited, uncertain what was going to happen next, the photographers walked straight on through and back to another smaller dining room.

An employee of the inn came over and told us, "Don't worry about it. This was already on the schedule." Evidently the photographers were having some kind of meeting of their own there at the inn. No employee of the inn told the photographers that we were staying there.

That Wednesday evening, the fire marshal of Tarrant County came out to see me at the inn. He told me as quietly and gently as he could that some people in Fort Worth had objected to Lee's burial at Rose Hill Cemetery. They were bringing some pressure to have the body moved from the Fort Worth area.

The county would do everything it could to protect the grave, he told me, but he felt that I should know about the protests.

Briefly that evening I considered the possibility of having Lee's body cremated to protect it from the ghouls who might try to break into his grave. The fire marshal had anticipated this possibility, and he left three forms with me. If I did decide on cremation, he said, I should sign those three forms and he would help me make the arrangements. I said nothing at all about this to Marina, and I still have the blank forms. I de-

cided after a few minutes that I would not allow bigots to frighten us into surrendering Lee's final resting place.

Earlier that Wednesday, the FBI finally appeared at the inn. They arrived just as Charlie Kunkel was about to drive me to some isolated spot where I could get a little exercise after being cooped up in the motel for most of the previous seventy-two hours.

"Whoops," Charlie said, just as we started out on the drive, "there's the Feebies." So I had to give up my chance to take a one- or two-mile hike somewhere out on a country road.

From the instant they arrived at the inn, the FBI agents were extremely hostile in their treatment of Marina. Because of their arrogance, Marina refused to cooperate with the FBI agents and after a few minutes she stopped talking to them at all. The agents then decided to use threats. They implied that Marina might not be allowed to remain in the United States—that she might be forced to return to Russia.

This made me angry. I told one of the agents—one of the pair of agents named Brown—that I didn't think Marina was in any danger of being deported and that I did not like their attempts to intimidate her. He said nothing at that moment, but later he and the other agent called me outside—out of Marina's hearing—and apologized for the effort to use this tactic on her. I wondered at the time what would have happened if Marina had been alone with those agents, who seemed to consider any approach acceptable as long as it offered some promise of success.

I told the two agents that Marina had been very cooperative with the Secret Service men, who had treated her with consideration and had not tried to bully her.

This obviously surprised them.

"Have the Secret Service men been questioning Marina?" one of them asked.

This surprised me. I had not realized before just how wide the gulf was between the Secret Service and the FBI. After all, about forty hours had passed since Marina was questioned by the Secret Service, and I would have expected the FBI to have complete reports on that tape-recorded interview and the long tape-recorded interviews with Mother and me. And even if the FBI hadn't received transcripts, did these two agents believe that we had been out there since Sunday night without being questioned at all about Lee?

"Yes," I said. "She's been cooperating completely with the Secret Service, and they have taped interviews with Marina, Mother and me."

They then changed their tactics, and Marina agreed to talk with them. I was not with her during the questioning, but after it had been going on about two hours I went over to the room where the agents, Secret Service Inspector Kelley, and Marina were and knocked on the door. Inspector Kelley opened it.

"Inspector," I said, "the baby's awake and needs to be fed."

Kelley went back into the room and told the agents. Then he came out into the hall and said to me, "I'm glad the baby woke up, because they've been going on for some time."

"Inspector," I said, "the baby's sound asleep, but I just decided enough is enough. She's been through enough these last few days and they can always talk to her another day."

He looked at me a moment and then said quietly, "Well, I'm glad you did it."

Mother left the Inn of the Six Flags on Thursday, November 28, and I returned home to Denton on Saturday, November 30. For five days the Denton police department had kept

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our home under observation, and I learned that this surveillance would continue as long as I thought it was necessary. Police cars would drive by every hour, looking for anything at all unusual in the neighborhood. The officers were under instructions to observe closely but not to stop at the house unless there was a reason to make a closer examination.

Those who patrolled the neighborhood filled out "house check" cards and after I had returned to Denton I received these periodically. Only one of these cards listed anything unusual—a report on a house check at 12 noon on Saturday, November 30. The card includes this note:

'60 Chevrolet parked in drive.  
Arkansas license number 256020.

That note referred to my car, which still had the license plates I had used while we were living in Arkansas, before our move to Denton in September, 1963.

That Saturday Secret Service Agent Talmadge Bailey told a Denton police officer that the investigators were now fairly certain that I had had nothing whatever to do with the assassination of President Kennedy, and suggested that the police might quietly pass that word around the city. I learned later that the police had followed Bailey's suggestion.

Vada and I had been in isolation during most of the eight days since the assassination, and we didn't know what we might face now that we were returning home. The Secret Service suggested that we protect ourselves from anonymous telephone calls by making arrangements with the telephone company for an unlisted number.

I realized that this proposal was made out of consideration for me and the members of my family, but I said no.

"I want to know which way the wind is blowing," I told one of the agents.

I have always been glad that I made that decision. If we had tried to cut ourselves off from the world by hiding behind an unlisted number, we would never have known how warm and sympathetic hundreds of people could be—old friends (some of whom we had not heard from for years), casual friends, business associates, acquaintances, and strangers.

The first day or two an agent would answer whenever our telephone rang. Often the person who had called seemed surprised by the unfamiliar voice, and the agent would say casually, "This is a friend of Robert's." Then he would ask the caller's name. If the caller was willing to give his name, the agent assumed that the call was legitimate and would pass the telephone receiver to me or to Vada.

By Monday, December 2, Vada and I began answering the telephone ourselves. We did not receive a single crank call.

The agents were also concerned about the possibility of threatening letters or bombs sent through the mails. Shortly after our arrival in Denton, Talmadge Bailey and I went to the post office to discuss this problem with the postmaster.

Bailey tried to lead up to the subject quietly, and I told the postmaster that it should be fairly easy to spot any unusual packages because I was expecting only one package in the next few weeks—some records I had ordered recently. But our calm words did not seem to help. The postmaster, a frail man in his sixties who had probably had a relatively untroubled career in the postal service, was obviously deeply disturbed by the possibility of bombs being sent through the mails, and he showed his nervousness by getting involved in a discussion of the rather technical question of whether he had the authority under postal regulations to examine packages to see whether or not they might include bombs. Bailey assured him that he would not be breaking any rules by taking a close look, and

after a few minutes a means of handling the problem was worked out that fortunately never had to be put into practice.

The mail was heavy, but it brought no threatening letters. Marina received thousands of letters from people asking whether she needed money, clothing, books, or help of any kind. Many people sent her a dollar or five or ten dollars without asking whether she needed financial aid. During the last week of November and the first two weeks of December she received something over \$25,000 through the mails.

The Secret Service also talked to the principal at our daughter's elementary school. The principal then spoke to the teachers and quietly pointed Cathy out to the ones who did not know her. Whenever Cathy went outside the classroom, at least one teacher would find a place where he or she could watch her without Cathy realizing that she was being watched. This extra precaution also proved unnecessary, fortunately.

The same day Cathy returned to school, December 2, I returned to work at Acme, accompanied by a Secret Service man. He spent most of the day in the reception area, quietly observing everyone who entered the office. When I walked over to the machine area or the loading platform, about 200 to 300 yards from the office, the agent would go along with me. Usually during that period I would motion to the agent on duty when I was about to leave the office, but I forgot to do that a couple of times. When I returned after those unannounced trips outside, I noticed the agent standing at a spot where he had been able to keep me in full view and was close enough to move at once if any trouble developed.

On Friday, December 6, Bob Camp was assigned to guard me at the office. I ate each day with the agent on duty, and about noon Bob and I went out to get into my car to drive over for lunch.

The car itself was not under guard. It was parked in its usual place on the Acme parking lot, and had been there all morning. We jumped in and I turned the key. The engine started with a strange noise—a loud, whining sound. We drove off the gravel onto the nearby pavement, and the sound continued. I had no idea what was wrong, but I thought it would be safer to turn off the ignition. I did—but the shrill sound continued.

Bob and I looked at each other for a second, then both of us got out of the car, moving slowly and trying to avoid any sudden motion. “Oh, no,” I said, “not in broad daylight”—half expecting to hear an explosion at any moment.

I guess we were more curious than cautious. Once we were out of the car, we reached over and opened the hood. We discovered the cause of the whine: the electric starter was stuck.

Except for that brief false alarm, the first week back in Denton passed without any difficulty, and by midweek I had made up my mind that we would be safe without Secret Service protection. I telephoned Inspector Kelley to thank him and to tell him that we would no longer have to tie up any of his agents. I did not intend to make any public statements about the assassination until after the Warren Commission had completed its investigation and made its report, I said. Kelley thought this in itself would reduce the likelihood of any undesirable incidents, but he emphasized that the protection was available as long as I wished to have it. But I told him my decision was firm, and added that I planned to turn over all the letters I had received from Lee to the Secret Service before the end of the week. I did—and the last agents on duty were relieved at 11:30 on Saturday, December 7. However, the Denton police continued the periodic house check for another five weeks.

### *Aftermath*

Although we were now settling into our old routine, each day would bring several reminders that our lives would never again be exactly the same as they were before November 22. I knew by now that our friends would not change their attitudes toward us because of the assassination, but with strangers I was never certain during those early weeks. Occasionally I was conscious of a very brief pause after I had given someone my name. Often there was no sign of any reaction at all—but the fact that I now half expected someone to react in some unfriendly or even hostile way was something new.

One day in December a couple came in to look at some bricks in our display room, and I went over and introduced myself. Apparently the husband didn't catch my name, but his wife did. The husband started looking at some brick samples, but the wife asked me, "Are you Lee's brother, Mr. Oswald?"

"Yes," I said.

With a half-conscious smile on her face, she said, "Well, I don't guess there's anything really that I can say. But I hope you understand that we don't hold anything against you."

I thanked her, recognizing her uncertainty and embarrassment. Then her husband turned around and said, "Well, Mr. Oswald, I'm sure you've had enough of that. Let's make a brick selection."

"I'm with you," I said.

The people I worked with at Acme and customers who had known me for months or years were uniformly kind and considerate. A couple of times I was with someone I knew well when a radio newscast or a television report included a reference to the assassination.

"Damn it," one of these friends said when Lee's name was mentioned during the program, "don't they ever get enough of that? Can't they talk about something else?"

I realized that people would be talking about Lee and the assassination long after both my friend and I were dead, but I appreciated the warmth of feeling behind his remark.

I myself was still trying to discover just what had happened on that Friday in November when I had my second—and final—meeting with Michael Paine on Sunday, December 8.

Marina had left the Inn of the Six Flags on Saturday, November 30, and was now staying with Jim Martin and his family at their home in Dallas. Martin, then still the manager of the inn, had appointed himself Marina's business manager.

I had promised to pick Marina up at Martin's house and drive her out to Lee's grave, but first she asked that I pick up some things she had left at the Paines' house in Irving. Martin and a lawyer named John Thorne drove over to Irving with me to help bring back the things Marina wanted.

During the drive over, Thorne and I had a brief discussion about Michael Paine. I asked him if he had heard that Michael was a member of the Fair Play for Cuba committee. Thorne said he had heard a rumor about that, but that he himself had no knowledge of Michael's membership. (I later heard that Thorne had represented Michael Paine on some personal legal matter and that he did know Paine before November 22, 1963. Thorne told me he had never met Michael Paine.)

Both the Paines were at home when we reached Irving. They helped us locate some clothes and furniture, Lee's seabag, Junie's toys, and some other miscellaneous items, and then gave us a hand in packing all these things into the station wagon. After we had loaded a lot of the material, Michael Paine called me aside as though he wanted to ask me something very confidential.

"Where is Marina staying now?" he asked.

I gave him a rather vague answer. "Oh, she's been staying

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around Dallas," I said, "but now she's about made up her mind to leave Texas."

I didn't want to be any more specific than that. I felt that Marina would let Ruth and Michael Paine know where she was if she felt like seeing them again, and in any case I wanted to protect her privacy as much as possible. But Michael was persistent. He kept asking me just where she was staying at the moment.

Finally I had to tell him, "I'm sorry, but I can't give that information to anyone."

Two things struck me about this second meeting with Michael. If his question about Marina was merely an expression of friendly interest and concern, why did he feel that it was necessary to get me off to one side, out of earshot of Ruth, Martin and Thorne, all of whom obviously at that moment were doing something to help Marina? The second strange aspect was his persistence. Once he realized that I did not want to tell him or anyone else just where Marina was then living, why did he keep repeating the question? Why was it so important to him to know where she was?

And, as during our first meeting, I was disturbed by his lack of feeling, by the icy coldness of his eyes. That day I decided firmly that Michael Paine knew a great deal more about what had happened on November 22 than he had yet told. When the Warren Commission report was published nine months later, I was even more certain.

That Sunday after lunch Marina and I got into my car for the drive out to Lee's grave.

As always, she asked me to stop at a florist's on the way to the cemetery. Marina had proved that she was able to live on very little money, but now suddenly she was receiving all those contributions, and one consequence was a certain childlike

extravagance. She would sometimes buy forty or fifty dollars' worth of flowers for Lee's grave at a time, and offer to buy more for me to take out to the cemetery. I would try to convince her that it was unnecessary and even foolish to spend the money that way, but this made little impression. She realized that the flowers would die in a few hours, but she was impulsive about such things, and she wanted to demonstrate her feelings about Lee in this way.

The drive to the cemetery took about an hour and a half, and usually Marina and I were alone in the car. On the way out, we might talk about almost any subject. She was trying to improve her command of English, and she would read the words on signs and billboards and discuss almost anything that came into her mind. Marina is quick and intelligent, and because she was ready to plunge into speaking English whenever she had the chance, some people got the impression that she had a better knowledge of the language than she did. This may have caused some of the confusion over parts of her testimony when she appeared before the Warren Commission.

While the conversation was general on the way to the cemetery, on the way back Marina's talk centered entirely on Lee. I seldom had to say anything on the return trip; she would recall one incident after another about their lives together. Once during these Sunday rides we saw someone fishing in a stream. In her broken English, she said, "When Lee and I go fishing . . . Everybody else, fishing pole and things . . ." She tried for a moment to find the words to describe the fishermen who went out with all kinds of elaborate equipment. "Lee . . . just string, just hook . . . he always catch first fish. Other people, all those things . . . catch nothing."

That story and dozens of others she told me on the ride back from the cemetery convinced me that Marina loved my brother. I had heard many rumors about her motives for marrying him

—from the simplest one, that she had married an American to escape from the drabness of life in Russia, to the more sinister stories implying that she was a Communist agent who had been ordered to marry Lee and had then played a major role in planning the assassination itself.

Briefly on the night of November 22 I had mulled over that possibility. But everything I observed about Marina from the time she first came off the plane at Love Field and every word and act of hers in the uncertain days just after the assassination convinced me that she was as surprised and troubled by Lee's final irrational act as I was. As time went on, I discovered that she knew a great deal about his earlier violent acts and that she said little to others about them. But I think she kept quiet about them because she hoped that Lee would gradually settle into a normal life.

After Lee's arrest, Marina was deeply concerned about her own safety and about the future of Junie and Rachel. Even before the assassination, she had often expressed her fear that the time might come when she would be sent back to Russia. Now she felt that this was far more likely, as her punishment because she was Lee's wife.

Twice I heard her speculate about the way those closest to Lee would have been treated if Lee had assassinated the head of the Russian government rather than the President of the United States. "Robert," she said, "if you and I and the children were in Russia, and something like this happened, we'd all be dead."

I'm certain that her fear of possible punishment did not arise out of any sense of guilt. As far as I could judge, her statement was based on the fact that she lived in Russia during a period when those closest to someone accused of an offense against the state would often suffer along with the man himself.

Her fear of deportation was increased, of course, by the

bullying tactics of the two FBI men who questioned her at the Inn of the Six Flags. All through December and January and into early February she expected each day to receive word that she and Junie and Rachel were about to be returned to Russia.

While Marina expected some kind of official penalty, other people had already decided that they could profit by exploiting Marina's name and her relationship with Lee. They were aware of the emotional response of thousands of strangers who sent her gifts and offers of help, and deduced that both the sympathy and the curiosity of millions of people could be appealed to through magazine articles, books, television, and motion pictures.

Jim Martin and John Thorne had offered to serve as Marina's agent in dealing with promoters, publishers, writers, and movie producers.

Martin and Thorne went ahead and made a number of agreements on their own, then telephoned me to ask whether I knew a Russian-language translator who could explain the terms of the various contracts to Marina.

I didn't understand how commitments could be made for Marina by Martin and Thorne before she even knew what the agreements involved, and told him that. Marina herself began to wonder about her two self-appointed agents after they suddenly decided that their commission should be increased from 10 percent to 15 percent.

One day when I went out to Martin's house, she asked me to come back to her bedroom. She had a small English-Russian dictionary there, and she turned the pages quickly until she came to the word she was looking for to describe Thorne, who had arrived just a moment or two before. She found the Russian word, and then pointed to the English translation: "sneaky."

### *Aftermath*

Since her reaction to Thorne now was the same as mine, I decided one of the things I had to do was to get her out of the hands of the two "business managers."

This took some time. I first suggested to Marina that it was a mistake to continue living with the Martin family. After she moved from their house to our home in Denton, we then sent Martin a notice by registered mail that his services as Marina's business agent were no longer required.

Shortly after that, Martin began sending us a whole series of contracts covering agreements he had made with various magazines, a book publisher, and a film company. The offers were substantial:

Texitalia Films .....	\$75,000
Stern Magazine .....	12,500
Meredith Press .....	25,000
London Daily Mirror .....	2,200
This Week Magazine .....	1,500

I felt that it would be wrong for Marina to accept this \$116,200 before she had carefully studied each proposal to make certain that she could in good conscience do what the contracts would obligate her to do. I'm sure that some of the offers were made in good faith, and perhaps all of them were. But hasty agreement seemed unwise to me, and as we talked over the whole matter, Marina agreed.

I also considered both Martin and Thorne opportunists. Martin was no longer working at the Inn of the Six Flags, but I noticed that he was now wearing tailor-made suits and looking unusually prosperous.

Despite this sudden flood of contracts, we went ahead with plans to dismiss Martin, and I then telephoned Thorne to tell him that he and Martin would no longer represent Marina. Thorne said he knew nothing about Martin's activities in signing those contracts, and later he made an unusual offer. He

would pay \$5,000 to Martin himself, he said, in recognition of the services Martin had rendered to Marina, and would then wait to be reimbursed by Marina later from payments she would receive from new contracts which Thorne would arrange.

I was perfectly willing to let Thorne turn over \$5,000 of his own money to Martin if he wished, but I made it clear that Marina would make future decisions on magazines, books, television, and films herself, without the intervention of outside managers.

After that, both Martin and Thorne dropped out of her life.

I was working long hours at Acme, trying to keep my mind occupied with business so I would not have much time to think about the assassination. By the second week of December I sometimes managed to block out the memory of November 22 for several hours at a time on the busiest days, but then a word, a sudden look, a story in the papers, a news item on the radio or television, would bring it all flooding back to me.

Late on the evening of December 11, 1963, I was alone in my office at Acme. I tried to think of other things, but my mind kept returning to those seconds in Dealey Plaza. I reached for a scrap of paper, and I wrote these words:

My brother, I do not judge you. If I judge you now I might never know the reason why. My God, my God, how can this be? Brother of mine, blood of my blood, can this be so? The Judge of Judges, He knows for sure, and so I ask of Him, can this be so? The child and young man I knew could not be the one. What devil of devils possessed this brother of mine? I say again, blood of my blood, the Judge of Judges knows, and He only—I shall not judge.

Part Four: *The Investigation—and*  
*the Unanswered Questions*



## *Chapter Eleven*

WHEN I returned from lunch on Friday, February 14, 1964, the receptionist gave me a list of calls that had come in while I was away from my desk. The most important one, she told me, was from a man named Wesley J. Liebeler, a member of the staff of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

I returned Mr. Liebeler's call, and he told me the Commission would appreciate it if I would come to Washington to testify the following Thursday, February 20.

The request surprised me. I had expected the Commission to send someone to Denton to take a sworn statement from me, but I had not anticipated giving formal testimony before the entire group in Washington. At that time, I had no clear idea of just how Chief Justice Earl Warren and the members of his Commission planned to carry out the assignment the President had asked them to take on. I hesitated only a second or two, and then told Mr. Liebeler that I would be happy to come to Washington to testify if I could get permission from Acme for the necessary days off.

Mr. Liebeler said the Commission would furnish me with an attorney if I wished to accept a lawyer designated by the staff. If I preferred to choose my own attorney, then I would have to pay his fee and expenses. I decided immediately that

I did not want to be represented by an attorney chosen by someone else, an attorney I did not know and who did not know me, but I told him I would think about the matter and give him my decision by Monday, February 17.

The evening before Liebeler's call, I had met a Dallas attorney named Bill McKenzie. He had been recommended to both me and Marina by a mutual friend, and had taken care of the final details in the dismissal of Martin and Thorne. A few hours after my talk with Liebeler, I asked McKenzie to serve as my attorney for the appearance before the Warren Commission, and after some discussion he agreed.

On Monday, I telephoned Liebeler to tell him about my choice and to work out the details about our Washington trip. The actual travel arrangements were made by Forrest Sorrels, who was the agent in charge of the Dallas Secret Service office. Sorrels made reservations for Bill and me on American Airlines Flight 20, which was scheduled to leave Love Field in Dallas on February 19, 1964, at 5:25 P.M. We had seats 8-A and 8-B. This was my first flight on a commercial jet, although I had flown in jet trainers while I was in the Marines.

We were told to get off the plane at Baltimore rather than Washington. I didn't find this unusual at the time. Perhaps, I thought, the best airport in the area is nearer Baltimore than Washington. Since then I have reached the conclusion that the Commission deliberately routed us away from Washington to protect us from the swarm of reporters who might be watching at Washington airports for the arrival of Warren Commission witnesses.

Bill decided that I should travel under an assumed name, and suggested "S. M. Johnson." Neither of us thought about the coincidence of selecting the last name of President Kennedy's successor. Bill happened to have a friend named S. M. Johnson, and merely felt that the name Johnson on the air-

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lines passenger list would attract less attention than the name Oswald.

During the flight from Dallas, Bill cautioned me about talking to Secret Service agents or anyone else in the hours before my actual appearance before the Commission.

Inspector Kelley, who met us at Friendship Airport in Baltimore and drove us to Washington, said casually to me during the drive, "Well, now, this is your second trip up this way, isn't it?"

I realized that this remark was supposed to convince me that the Secret Service and the Warren Commission knew a great deal about me. I had passed through Washington once before, when I was on my way to visit Mother and Lee and John and John's family in New York in 1953.

"That's right," I said, "I was through here one other day."

The inspector then asked me another question. I don't remember what the question was, but as he asked it, I thought of Bill's instructions. Instead of answering, I said, "The snow is awfully pretty up here at night."

This was an obvious evasion, and Bill, who was sitting in the back seat of the inspector's car, leaned forward and said, "Inspector, I've advised Robert not to answer any questions unless we're before the Commission."

The inspector didn't respond, but we rode in silence for most of the rest of the trip. When we passed the White House, Inspector Kelley did comment on the fact that all the lights were out there, in contrast to the bright illumination of many other buildings in the city.

When we reached the Willard Hotel, Inspector Kelley, Bill and I walked toward the registration desk. Bill was going to stay with his mother at her home, but Kelley said he had made arrangements for a room at the Willard for me.

As we approached the desk, the inspector said rather loudly, "I have a reservation for Kelley."

"Sorry, sir, but that has been canceled," the clerk replied.

"Well, give us another room," Kelley said.

Bill and I grinned at each other. Both of us felt the little scene between the inspector and the desk clerk had been staged entirely for our benefit. The clerk's remark was obviously meant to assure us that I was going to be staying in a room chosen at random and that therefore I could be sure that the room had not been bugged in advance by the Secret Service or the Warren Commission. This immediately convinced both Bill and me that the room had been carefully bugged before our arrival.

When we went up to see the room, the inspector told me that John Howlett, the agent who had been with me at Parkland Hospital when the news came of Lee's death, was staying down the hall and would be happy to talk with me if I had any questions or anything I'd like to discuss with him.

Bill turned to me and said, "You're not to leave this room for any reason tonight. I'll knock on the door in the morning at seven-thirty and we'll have breakfast together."

My appearance before the Commission had been set for nine-thirty on February 20, but the inspector told us after we reached Washington, "The Commission requests that you come down at eight-thirty rather than nine-thirty."

This sounded fine to Bill and me. We both wanted to start as early as possible, hoping that we could then get away on a reasonably early plane that evening.

The inspector joined us for breakfast, and drove us to the Veterans Building at 200 Maryland Avenue, NE. We followed him into the elevator and up to the second or third floor.

We first went to the office of Albert Jenner, where we met Jenner and Liebeler. As we talked to the two staff members, I soon realized that our early arrival had not been arranged for the benefit of the Commission, but just to give Jenner and Liebeler a chance to find out something about Bill's professional background. I was asked a few unimportant questions, but most of the first forty-five minutes or so was devoted to a number of questions to Bill about his previous work, his firm, and his acquaintance with other attorneys.

After that long exchange, the inspector told us that the Commission was ready to convene. We walked down the hallway and saw a uniformed guard outside an open doorway. The four of us entered.

The room was dominated by a table that was large enough to seat about a dozen people without crowding. Chief Justice Earl Warren and Allen W. Dulles were standing behind their chairs on one side of the table, and Congressman Gerald Ford was standing behind his chair on the opposite side. Jenner introduced me to these three members of the Commission, then to J. Lee Rankin, head of the Commission staff, Leon Jaworski, a special Texas representative, and to the court reporter.

As we sat down, the door was closed behind us.

"Gentlemen," the Chief Justice said, "the Commission will be in order."

The Chief Justice was an impressive figure even in those relatively casual surroundings. I had never before had any strong impression of him one way or the other, but as he presided very quietly he struck me as a really distinguished man.

Dulles seemed very cool, and I was particularly aware of his eyes. They are extraordinarily penetrating, and seemed capable of seeing beneath the surface.

Gerry Ford struck me as a very ambitious young man who saw his assignment on the Commission as an opportunity to get some public attention. The way he walked, the way he talked, his entire manner, seemed to bear out this interpretation.

I liked the three staff members—Rankin, Jenner, and Liebeler—and found them easy to talk to. Rankin was rather short and very quiet; Jenner was thin, dark and wiry; Liebeler was young, energetic, eager. I had assumed that the men who were heading such an important investigation must have unusual qualifications, but as the morning went on I began to wonder. Some of the questions they asked me seemed both trivial and irrelevant. I was asked to supply some details that almost anyone who had read the newspapers could have given without any trouble. Other times I felt that the inquiries bordered on invasion of privacy—questions that had nothing to do with the central investigation but were asked out of idle curiosity.

Although some of these questions seemed offensive, I did not hesitate to give the answers if I knew them. I had made up my mind to give the Commission full cooperation, and of course I could not be sure that even the seemingly irrelevant questions did not have some significance in the over-all inquiry.

Occasionally the Commission staff seemed to recognize how far afield the questions had gone, and tried to anticipate any objections from me or Bill. On page 267 of the volume in which my testimony appears, Jenner himself says:

“We have explained to Mr. Oswald that this particular phase of the matter covers Lee Harvey Oswald’s entire life and I added it also covered Mr. Oswald’s life. At times the particular thrust of the examination might not be particularly apparent to Mr. McKenzie but he is at liberty to inquire as the case might be. But we are covering the entire lives.”

Three or four times Jenner seemed to be apologizing to members of the Commission itself about the apparent irrelevance of some line of inquiry. I kept waiting for him to go a step farther and explain just why something which seemed to have nothing whatever to do with the Commission's assignment should be pursued if even the members of the Commission itself were baffled by the questions and confused about the significance of the answers. This rather strange professional behavior of the Commission staff may have contributed to the later criticism of the Warren Commission report.

While the hearings started with a little formality, they became more and more relaxed after the first couple of hours. If I found myself getting thirsty, I would pick a good moment to interrupt Mr. Jenner and excuse myself. From time to time I would think of something which I wasn't sure was important enough or definite enough to include in the official record, and we would have a brief, casual off-the-record discussion about it.

When we adjourned for lunch that first day, Inspector Kelley suggested that we go out the back door of the building to avoid the reporters who were waiting downstairs.

That idea didn't appeal to me at all.

"Inspector," I said, "I'm not in the habit of going out back doors."

I had faced reporters before, and they didn't bother me. If we had sneaked out of the building, it seemed to me that would make them think that we had something to hide. I always felt that I was ready to face facts, however uncomfortable or disturbing the facts might be, and this was no time to begin behaving secretively or mysteriously.

My attorney, Bill McKenzie, suggested to me that it would be a good idea to have a brief statement ready for the reporters before going downstairs. We worked one out, there in the hall-

way, then we got into the elevator, along with the members of the Commission and some members of the Commission staff.

As soon as the elevator doors opened on the ground floor, we were surrounded by reporters. Allen Dulles gave them a brief statement, then Bill read them my statement.

Some of the reporters followed us out of the building and along the sidewalk as we walked toward a nearby cafeteria to have lunch.

After lunch Bill said he would like to take me over to the Supreme Court building, since this would probably be the only time we would have to do any sight-seeing in Washington. The Supreme Court was just a block away from the cafeteria and I said I would be interested in seeing Chief Justice Warren doing his regular job.

When we entered the Supreme Court chamber it was already so crowded that folding chairs had been set up in the aisles. I was about to sit down in one of these when I looked up and saw Chief Justice Warren who was just coming back from lunch. He saw me, too, and as we both sat down I thought I saw a twinkle in his eyes, as if he wondered what I was doing there. Bill and I didn't stay very long. The proceedings were very dry—attorneys presenting a patent case. But I was glad I had a chance to see the Court in action.

About three o'clock Bill and I were notified that the Commission would not be able to complete my testimony that afternoon and they would like us to stay over another day. This complicated matters for both of us. I had expected to be back at work the next day and Bill was supposed to fly to San Francisco on another legal matter. Bill wanted to call the chairman of the board of the Acme Brick Company to ask permission for me to stay an extra day, but I told him the name of my immediate supervisor and said we could start with him and then

## *The Investigation—and the Unanswered Questions*

work our way up if necessary. They did reach him—and he assured Mr. Rankin that I could take whatever time was necessary.

Throughout my two and a half days before the Commission, a great deal of attention was given to the question of whether Lee was left-handed or right-handed. Eleven different times I was asked directly whether Lee was left-handed.

This line of questioning puzzled me, and for a while gave me hope that Lee might be innocent. I thought the Commission had run across some unannounced piece of evidence that clearly indicated that the assassin of President Kennedy was left-handed. Since I knew with absolute certainty that Lee was right-handed, then obviously he could not have been guilty if the man who shot the President was left-handed.

Actually, it turned out that the Commission had been misled by something my mother had said. She told the Commission: "Lee was left-handed. He wrote left-handed and ate right-handed."

Mother was wrong. I do not know whether she was just confused at that moment, whether she had really forgotten, or whether the whole idea of Lee being left-handed had been planted in her mind by someone else. In any case, once she made the statement the Commission had to explore the matter thoroughly, since the rifle used in the assassination was right-handed. I believe it would have been impossible for a left-handed man to fire the three shots from the rifle in the limited time available.

I happen to write with my left hand and use my right hand for other purposes, such as throwing a ball or shooting a rifle. I find it difficult to understand how Mother could transfer these characteristics from me to Lee, but that is another possible explanation for her testimony.

Some people who have challenged the Warren Commission report on many different details include the flat statement that Lee was left-handed, and point to Mother's words on page 163 of Volume I. This is one subject on which I can speak with absolute authority, since I have seen Lee eat, write, play ball, and fire a rifle, and I say firmly: Lee was right-handed.

## *Chapter Twelve*

AFTER I testified before the Warren Commission, I began to hear many rumors about "newly found evidence" that supposedly proved Lee innocent, or implicated others in the assassination. One of the puzzling pieces of evidence was a photograph taken as the Presidential limousine was passing in front of the Texas School Book Depository on Friday, November 22. President Kennedy could be identified easily in the car, and the Depository Building could be seen clearly in the background. There near the entrance to the building stood a man who bore a strong resemblance to Lee.

Obviously, if that was Lee in the photograph, someone else fired the shots that killed the President.

The photograph was widely published in the weeks before the Warren Commission report was issued. Through a radio and television reporter I knew, Murphy Martin of ABC, I obtained a glossy print, and then collected all the photographs of Lee I could find. As I studied the face of the man standing in front of the Texas School Book Depository building, I saw an extraordinary resemblance to Lee, feature by feature. Only one detail raised some doubt in my mind. The man in the photograph appeared to be a little heavier than Lee. But there was a possible explanation for that, too. If he was wearing his

jacket or shirt loosely, the bunched-up cloth could make the figure in the photograph appear heavier than it was.

While examining the face in the photograph, I particularly noticed the shadowy upper lip. This was a striking detail, since Lee always had a kind of shadowy mustache even just after he had shaved.

With the help of Murphy Martin I made arrangements with Roy S. Truly, the superintendent of the Texas School Book Depository, to drop by on Friday morning, September 25, 1964, to see Billy Lovelady, the Depository employee the investigators had identified as the man in the photograph.

While we were waiting at the counter just inside the main entrance of the Book Depository, Murphy turned to me and said quietly, "I believe that's Lovelady standing back there in the rear."

I looked back and saw a man about five feet, nine inches tall apparently packing some books about fifty or sixty feet from where we were standing. From that distance, the man looked like Lee from the shoulders up, especially when seen in profile. For a moment, I was shaken by the extraordinary resemblance.

Murphy and I went on in to Mr. Truly's office and sat down. I told Mr. Truly about the questions raised in my mind by my close study of the photograph, and he was helpful and sympathetic.

After a few moments Billy Lovelady joined us. Now that I could see him up close, there was very little resemblance between him and Lee. Lovelady is stockier than Lee was, his face is fuller, and his hair is thinner.

I thanked him for taking a few minutes off from work to talk to us, and told him I knew what a nuisance it must be to be questioned by officials, reporters and strangers about the picture. He was very pleasant, and spoke quietly about his talks with the FBI.

I am glad that I had gotten that accidental view of Lovelady from a distance. During those few seconds my eyes had seen the same apparent similarities between Lovelady and Lee the camera recorded, while the closer look in Mr. Truly's office emphasized the differences. If I had not had that earlier chance to study him, that photograph would have left some trace of doubt in my mind.

From the unannounced visit to the Depository building, Murphy Martin and I went on to the studio of one of the Dallas television stations. There he received a call from his office in New York telling him that a copy of the summary report of the Warren Commission was being placed on a plane leaving New York for Dallas, and that the plane should reach Dallas at 4:20 that afternoon.

"I know you would like to read it, Robert," Murphy said.  
"Can you stay over tonight?"

"I sure can," I said.

Murphy and I met the plane that afternoon and began examining the report on the drive from the airport back into the city. We both stayed up until about 2:30 the next morning reading the volume, and after a few hours' sleep finished reading most of it Saturday morning, September 26.

Murphy wanted to tape interviews with Waggoner Carr, then attorney general of the state of Texas, and with me for use on Sunday, September 27, the official press release date for the report. I went with Murphy to the Carr interview. The attorney general had received one of the advance copies of the summary report, and it bore a label restricting its distribution to authorized readers.

"I wish you could read this, Robert," Carr said. "I believe it would help answer a lot of questions in your mind."

I wasn't sure what the attorney general would think if he

learned that I had stayed up much of the night reading another copy of the report he was so carefully safeguarding, so I played dumb. I felt that I had some right to see what the Commission had concluded, since I had spent two and a half days testifying before it and since the report was meant to establish the guilt or innocence of my brother.

Late that Saturday afternoon, Murphy taped my answers to several questions about the investigation and the report. Obviously, I had not had time to study it in detail, but I did feel ready to give my general reactions on the basis of that first hurried reading of the summary report.

"If you were on a jury and the Warren Commission [report] was the evidence on which you were to base your verdict, would you find the defendant guilty or innocent of the assassination of President Kennedy?" Murphy asked me.

"It is a difficult question to answer," I said, "but . . . based on the findings of the Warren Commission, in my opinion there is only one conclusion, and that is that Lee did assassinate the President of the United States and also killed Officer Tippit. I don't see how anyone can reach any other conclusion. . . ."

"There is no longer any doubt in your mind?"

"No, there is not. . . . There is still one question in my mind—that Lee did not originate this idea—either he was encouraged or helped along by individuals or an individual."

"Either directly or indirectly?"

"Correct."

Once I had the chance to examine the full twenty-six volumes of the Warren Commission report, I began to notice the weaknesses that have since given many critics the opportunity to characterize it as misleading or even worthless.

I disagree with those who have made a profession of denouncing the Commission. I have seen no convincing evidence that the Commission, the FBI, the Secret Service, the State De-

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partment, the CIA, and the President joined in some melodramatic conspiracy to deceive the American people. And I do not believe any of the investigating groups deliberately concealed facts or manufactured evidence to fit some preconceived theory.

At the same time, I do have strong reservations about the investigation and about the Warren Commission report. Some important questions were never asked. Some were asked but never answered. Some troubling inconsistencies were left unresolved. Some witnesses who gave testimony that cast doubt on some Commission findings were simply ignored.

My own attention was focused early on a wide range of questions involving the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle used in the assassination.

The first of these questions dealt with the rather casual concealment of the rifle in the cluttered garage at the home of Michael and Ruth Paine. How the rifle could remain in that frequently used garage for weeks without ever being identified as a rifle by Michael or Ruth Paine still baffles me.

In July, 1964, *Redbook* magazine published an interview with Ruth Paine which touched on this but did not explore it very deeply.

"Did you have any idea that he had a gun in the garage?" the writer asked.

"No," Ruth Paine said. "They had a lot of their stuff stored there, books, household things. Michael had moved the gun wrapped in an old blanket, tied with rope, more than once. Of course he didn't know it was a gun."

That was the first I knew that anyone other than Lee himself had ever handled the rifle in any way after Lee had received it from Chicago. When the Warren Commission volumes were published, I read Michael Paine's testimony with

special interest—and was surprised by several things in it, including his own more detailed account of his handling the odd-shaped, blanket-wrapped package which apparently contained the rifle. This passage appears in Volume II, on pages 414-415:

MR. LIEBELER. Now yesterday, we asked you about an incident that happened in September of 1963 when you went into your garage to use some tools, your garage in Irving, Texas. Would you tell us about that?

MR. PAINE. I don't remember whether the date was September. I remember that was the date they came back from New Orleans and I do remember that my wife asked me to unpack some of their heavy things from the car. I only recall unpacking duffelbags, but any other package, that was the heaviest thing there and they were easy also.

MR. LIEBELER. You must have moved the duffelbags from the station wagon into the garage?

MR. PAINE. That is right. I unpacked whatever was remaining in the station wagon to the garage. So sometime later, I do remember moving about this package which, let's say, was a rifle, anyway it was a package wrapped in a blanket. The garage was kind of crowded and I did have my tools in there and I had to move this package several times in order to make space for work, and the final time I put it on the floor underneath the saw where the bandsaw would be casting dust on it and I was a little embarrassed to be putting his goods on the floor, but I didn't suppose, the first time I picked it up I thought it was camping equipment. I said to myself they don't make camping equipment of iron pipes any more.

MR. LIEBELER. Why did you say that to yourself when you picked up the package?

MR. PAINE. I had, my experience had been, my earliest camping equipment had been a tent of iron pipes. This somewhat reminded me of that. I felt a pipe with my right hand and it was iron, that is to say it was not aluminum.

MR. LIEBELER. How did you make that distinction?

MR. PAINE. By the weight of it, and by the, I suppose the

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moment of inertia, you could have an aluminum tube with a total weight massed in the center somehow but that would not have had the inertia this way.

MR. DULLES. You were just feeling this through the blanket though?

MR. PAYNE. I was also aware as I was moving his goods around, of his rights to privacy. So I did not feel—I had to move this object, I wasn't thinking very much about it but it happens that I did think a little bit about it or before I got on to the working with my tools I thought, an image came to mind.

MR. LIEBELER. Did you think there was more than one tent pole in the package or just one tent pole?

MR. PAYNE. As I say, I moved it several times, and I think I thought progressively each time. I moved it twice. It had three occasions. And the first one was an iron, thought of an iron pipe and then I have drawn, I drew yesterday, a picture of the thing I had in mind. Then in order to fill out the package I had to add another object to it and there I added again I was thinking of camping equipment, and I added a folding shovel such as I had seen in the Army, a little spade where the blade folds back over the handle. This has the trouble that this blade was too symmetrical I disposed to the handle and to fit the package the blade had to be off center, eccentric to the handle. Also, I had my vision of the pipe. It had an iron pipe about 30 inches long with a short section of the pipe going off 45 degrees. No words here, it just happened that I did have this image in my mind of trying to fill up that package in the back burner of my mind.

The Commission did not seem surprised or puzzled by this elaborate theory devised to account for the shape of the package. I was—and I was also startled by two other passages in Michael Paine's testimony.

One concerned the subject of a conversation between Paine and Lee:

MR. LIEBELER. Do you remember any other conversation you and Oswald had during this first evening that you met?

*LEE—Part Four*

THE CHAIRMAN. From the first day, are you going back to?

MR. LIEBELER. Yes.

MR. PAINE. I think we probably spoke, I was trying still to find common ground with him, and I think we probably spoke critically of the far right. It even seems to me we may have mentioned Walker. I had been bothered at the time that Walker had—I guess it doesn't do any good to enter into the matter because I don't remember his response.

MR. LIEBELER. Did you mention Walker's name during the first meeting?

MR. PAINE. My memory is very foggy. But I would take it as —this was an impression.

MR. LIEBELER. Give us your best recollection, and I want to ask you again this was in early April 1963, that you had this conversation, is that correct?

MR. PAINE. It was that first meeting when we had them over to dinner and Ruth can give you the date of that.

MR. LIEBELER. For the benefit of the Commission the record indicates it was about April 2, 1963, that that occurred.

Five days after that brief discussion between Michael Paine and Lee about General Walker, Lee went out to Walker's house, apparently with the intention of shooting the general. And three days after that, Lee returned to General Walker's house and fired a shot through a window, just missing him.

The third section of Michael Paine's testimony which I have read several times tells of a conversation Paine had with an acquaintance before the first news of the assassination was broadcast:

MR. LIEBELER. Where were you on the morning of November 22, 1963?

MR. PAINE. I was having, at the time of the assassination, I was at work, of course, but at the time of the assassination I was in the cafeteria associated with the bowling alley having lunch.

MR. LIEBELER. Who was with you?

MR. PAINE. A student, a co-op student called Dave Noel hap-

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pened to be with me. We happened to be talking about the character of assassins at that lunch-time, of all things.

MR. LIEBELER. Prior to the time you heard of the assassination?

MR. PAINE. That is right. When we first sat down at the meal we were discussing it, beside the point, except unless you believe in extrasensory perception, but we happened to just—we didn't have enough historical knowledge to explore it, but I just raised the question and tried to pursue it, and then dropped it, and then a waitress came and said the President had been shot, and I thought she was cracking a nasty joke, and went over to a cluster of people listening around a transistor set, and heard there was some commotion of this sort from the tone of the voice of the transistor set, and we went back to the lab where there is a good radio, and followed the news from there. When it was mentioned, the Texas School Book Depository Building was mentioned, then I told Frank Krystnik that that was where Lee Oswald worked, and then in a few minutes he came back and said, he asked me, didn't I think I had better call the FBI and tell them. So over a period of about 20 minutes, I trying to carry on work in a foolish way, or talking and discussing other things or something, we were discussing this problem, and I thought, I said to myself, or said to him, that the FBI already knew he worked there. Everybody would know he was a black sheep, and I didn't want to—a friend or one of the few friends in position of friendship to him, I didn't want to—join the mob barking at his heels or join in his harassment, so I declined. I didn't tell Frank that he couldn't call the FBI, but I said I wasn't going to do it, so I didn't.

\* \* \*

MR. LIEBELER. You left for home before there had been any public connection made between Oswald and the assassination, is that correct?

MR. PAINE. Well, of course, the police were reporting they had suspects here and suspects there, were chasing suspects over here, and here was a man who had shot Officer Tippit.

They didn't even mention him as a suspect, but there was another murder coincident in time.

MR. LIEBELER. So the news broadcast connected Oswald with Officer Tippit?

MR. PAINE. That is right.

MR. LIEBELER. Did you then consider again whether or not Oswald had been involved in the assassination?

MR. PAINE. Well, that was too much to have his name mentioned away from his place of work as having killed somebody; the stew was too thick to stay at work, and I was shaken too much, anyway.

In addition to these puzzling passages from Michael Paine's testimony, I found other parts of the 26-volume report baffling or unsatisfactory. The Commission devoted hundreds of hours—perhaps thousands—to the attempt to discover every possible fact about the Mannlicher-Carcano. Much of that time was wasted, I believe, because of the failure to plan the investigation carefully and to dig a little deeper.

The rifle was shipped from Klein's in Chicago on March 20, 1963, and undoubtedly took two or three days to reach Lee in Dallas.

Lee was working full time, Monday through Friday, until April 6. So during the first couple of weeks he had the rifle, his practice was necessarily limited chiefly to weekends. On April 7, the day after he was fired, he went out to General Walker's house with the intention of shooting him. Since he was no longer working, he may very well have spent some time April 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 practicing before he went out for the second time on April 10 and actually fired through a window at General Walker. But he was still not absolutely familiar with the weapon, and his practice time was pretty limited, and these two factors could help account for his failure to hit the general. Another factor could be the plate-glass window through which he fired. The distortion of the glass perhaps made it difficult

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for Lee to focus on the target, and the glass may have been dirty. In any case, it is not easy to fire accurately at night and he was probably nervous.

All of these factors probably contributed to Lee's failure, but I believe the real reason Walker's life was spared was that Lee had not yet become accustomed to the new rifle, and had never before used a telescopic sight.

I am certain about this. We talked a great deal about rifles and hunting whenever we had any time together, because he knew that this was one of my hobbies. When I last saw Lee in November, 1962, I'm sure he would have told me if he had been learning to use a telescopic sight or if he had been doing any hunting or practice shooting. It would have been a natural subject of conversation for us.

Someone who is accustomed to using rifles without scopes does not find it easy to adjust to the use of a scope. Riflemen making the change often fail to allow for the recoil, and some have suffered severe injuries as a result—some have even had their eyes cut open.

The contrast between Lee's failure to kill General Walker and his tragic success on November 22 cannot be accounted for unless we assume that he spent a considerable amount of time practicing with the Mannlicher-Carcano during the intervening months, growing accustomed to the weapon and its telescopic sight.

That is why I find it hard to understand the Commission's refusal to take seriously the testimony of the witnesses who helped account for the difference in the results of the two assassination attempts. The report states:

The witnesses who claimed to have seen Oswald at the firing range had more than a passing notice of the person they had observed. Malcolm H. Price, Jr., adjusted the scope on the individual's rifle on one occasion; Garland G. Slack had an alter-

cation with the individual on another occasion because he was shooting at Slack's target; and Sterling C. Wood, who on a third date was present at the [Sports Drome Rifle] range with his father, Dr. Homer Wood, spoke with his father and very briefly with the man himself about the individual's rifle. All three of these persons, as well as Dr. Wood, expressed confidence that the man they saw was Oswald. Two other persons believed they saw a person resembling Oswald firing a similar rifle at another range near Irving two days before the assassination.

Then the report makes this startling statement:

Although the testimony of these [six] witnesses was partially corroborated by other witnesses, there was other evidence which prevented the Commission from reaching the conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the person these witnesses saw.

The report then gives a rather detailed explanation of the reason the Commission decided to ignore this extraordinary amount of eyewitness testimony by at least six responsible people. I find the explanation itself baffling. Even while defending its decision, the Commission sometimes acknowledges the flimsiness of the "evidence" it has decided to credit while dismissing the eyewitness testimony. For example, first there is this statement:

Neither Oswald's name nor any of his known aliases was found in the sign-in register maintained at the Sports Drome Rifle Range....

But in the same sentence, the Commission notes: "Many customers did not sign this register."

The Commission seems to be marshaling its evidence clearly in another passage: "Price remembers that the individual told him that his scope was Japanese, that he had paid \$18 for it, and that he had it mounted in a gunshop in Cedar Hills...."

It sounds as though the Commission is about to disprove all three of these assertions in some dramatic fashion. It does challenge one of them in a rather vague way: "apparently no such shop exists in that area." But then the report says: "The scope on the Mannlicher-Carcano was of Japanese origin but it was worth a little more than \$7 and was already mounted when he received the rifle...." The only unusual detail in Price's quote—that the scope was made in Japan—is confirmed. Surely an exaggeration in the price is insignificant under the circumstances.

Here is a much more astonishing statement in the report that seems to be proving something until you analyze it:

Though the person believed to be Oswald retained his shell casings, presumably for reuse, all casings recovered from areas where it is believed that Oswald may have practiced have been examined by the FBI Laboratory, and none has been found which was fired from Oswald's rifle.

*If* the witnesses told the Commission investigators that the man they believed to be Oswald "retained his shell casings, presumably for reuse," then why should the Commission be surprised to discover that "none [of the casings recovered on the range] . . . was fired from Oswald's rifle?" Obviously shell casings *retained* by Oswald would not be there to be *recovered* by later investigators. In this case, as in some others in this section, the writers of the report seem to have made a deliberate effort to mislead a careless reader into thinking the Commission has found something to discredit those six eyewitnesses.

Hugh Aynesworth, an experienced reporter then working for the Dallas *Morning News*, interviewed five of the practice-range witnesses, and he was impressed by their testimony. The Commission itself does not challenge them. It does not contend that they joined in a conspiracy to deceive the Commis-

sion. It simply ignores what they have to say. It concludes that "there is no other evidence which indicates that he took the rifle or a package which might have contained the rifle out of the Paines' garage, where it was stored, prior to that date."

If the Commission were right about this, it would cast a serious doubt on its central finding.

If Lee did not spend a considerable amount of time practicing with that rifle in the weeks and months before the assassination, then I would say that Lee did not fire the shots that killed the President and wounded Governor Connally.

How did he get to a rifle range or out into open country for his firing sessions? If he had depended upon public transportation, people would have noticed him carrying a weapon aboard a bus, streetcar, or train, however carefully he tried to conceal it. I know of no witnesses who recalled seeing him traveling on public transportation with a rifle. That's why I find it difficult to understand the Commission's eagerness to dismiss the one group of witnesses who give us a clear idea of when and where and how Lee learned to use his new rifle with the precision he displayed on November 22.

By casually discarding the recollections of those witnesses, the Commission failed to take up another question which has always seemed important to me. At least two of the witnesses said that Lee was not alone when he came to the firing range. One of them said he saw someone hand Lee a rifle over the fence. The Commission apparently made no effort to discover who this man was.

I find it easier to believe that Lee spent some time practicing with the Mannlicher-Carcano between April and November than to accept the Commission's conclusion that the rifle was stored away during most of that time—particularly for several weeks before the assassination. Without a considerable amount of practice with that weapon, I do not understand how Lee

could have fired it with an accuracy that some of the best riflemen in the United States found it difficult to match.

It would have taken hours of practice for Lee to become acquainted with the characteristics of the rifle, its recoil, and especially the use of the scope. He had to know, for example, whether the scope was zeroed in for one hundred yards or one hundred and fifty yards or two hundred yards. Unless he knew that, he could have overshot any target.

I have always felt that the rifle tests made by the Warren Commission staff were meaningless. The Commission did not try to find three or four men whose Marine Corps records indicated about Lee's level of skill. Lee's scores in the Marine Corps prove beyond any doubt that he was never an expert rifleman. Instead, the Commission selected three or four of the best riflemen in the United States, set up conditions that did not duplicate those of November 22, and then ignored any of the test results that cast doubt upon Lee's ability to fire the rifle accurately within the known time limits.

For the test to have any validity, obviously the Commission should have begun by choosing three or four riflemen of average—or even below-average—skill. The men who were chosen should not have had any longtime familiarity with telescopic sights, since never before April, 1963, to my knowledge had Lee used a telescopic sight. They should have spent no more time in practicing with the weapon than the Commission contends Lee spent (unless the Commission was ready to reverse itself on this point). And, of course, the basic conditions should have been duplicated exactly. The shots should have been fired from the same height, at a target moving at the same speed, under similar light conditions, and in exactly the same period of time. I understand that the Commission's tests failed to meet five of these six rather obvious requirements.

I would be willing to work with the Commission in setting

up such a test. I believe I know more about Lee's ability as a rifleman than anyone else, since I did have a chance to observe him over a number of years, from the moment he first learned to handle a rifle.

I would also be willing to make some tests myself with the rifle used in the assassination. I believe I am a better shot than Lee was, but I also understand his particular characteristics as a rifleman, and this would help me judge just how well he would have handled that particular weapon.

One of the central questions I would like to help resolve is just how much time it took to fire three shots from the Mannlicher-Carcano.

I feel that it is a mistake to say flatly that the rifle requires a minimum of 2.3 seconds to operate. I find only three brief passages of testimony in the Warren Commission volumes that focus on this specific question. Special Agent Robert A. Frazier, an FBI expert on firearms, offered this estimate of how long it would take to fire two shots from the Mannlicher-Carcano:

“...I would say from 4.8 to 5 seconds, in that area. 4.6 is firing this weapon as fast as the bolt can be operated, I think.”

Lyndal L. Shaneyfelt, a photography expert for the FBI, made these two almost identical assertions about the time required for a shot:

“And we have been advised that the minimum time for firing the rifle in successive shots is approximately two and a quarter seconds.”

“We have been advised that the minimum time for getting off two successive well-aimed shots on the rifle is approximately two and a quarter seconds.”

Apparently the Commission felt that the estimate of “approximately two and a quarter seconds” given by Mr. Shaneyfelt was too vague. Instead, it chose an estimate that sounded much more exact: 2.3 seconds. Obviously, this figure was ar-

rived at by taking the 4.6 seconds mentioned by Mr. Frazier and dividing it by two.

I'm surprised that experienced riflemen have not pointed out the fallacy of this assertion by the Commission. Anyone who has spent any time on a rifle range or hunting knows that there are wide variations in the time he requires for different shots. If a hunter found that on the average it required 4.6 seconds for him to fire two shots once his target was in sight, he would not make the mistake of assuming that each of those shots took exactly 2.3 seconds. There often would be a substantial difference in the time required for a first shot and a follow-up shot, for example. The first shot might easily use 3 of the 4.6 seconds, and the follow-up shot only 1.6 seconds.

To reach some conclusion about the reliability of the tests made by the Commission, it is also important to know something about the speed of the reflexes of the man who required 4.6 seconds to fire the rifle twice. Did anyone attempt to prove that the reflexes of the men used in the tests were the same, or even approximately the same, as Lee's? The record doesn't indicate that any such effort was made. And, of course, even if it had been, a man's reflexes can vary from time to time.

I have some idea of the speed of Lee's reflexes, both from my general observation of him while we were growing up and specifically because of a game we used to play. Sometimes Lee and I would walk up to each other and fake an unexpected punch, to test each other's reactions. I discovered from this game that Lee had very rapid reflexes. He was also much stronger than he looked. For a small man, he had unusual strength in his hands, and his forearms were well developed and powerful.

Once it had firmly settled upon the idea that each shot took a minimum of 2.3 seconds, the Commission then went to some

trouble to account for the number of injuries received by the President and Governor Connally in a very limited time. The motion pictures taken by Abe Zapruder were used to calculate the approximate time between the firing of the first and the third shots.

The Commission seems to have accepted the theory of one persuasive staff member that the first shot missed, the second injured both the President and Governor Connally but then emerged in near-perfect condition, and that the third caused the massive head damage that killed the President.

In attempting to prove this, the Commission had to demonstrate among other things that one bullet could pass through Kennedy's neck, travel a long route through the body of Governor Connally, and then exit in almost perfect condition. The Commission experts purchased at least 250 rounds of ammunition to use in the various tests, but in the published report I have not been able to discover any clear indication of how many rounds were fired to produce the one bullet that looked like the one that supposedly passed through the bodies of both men.

The Commission may have convinced some people that the one bullet caused the extensive injuries to two men and then emerged in that condition. It has not convinced me, partly because of the vagueness of its report on its own efforts to demonstrate the reasonableness of its theory. I feel that these tests, like many of the others carried out with the Mannlicher-Carcano, were ill-conceived, unrealistic, and finally meaningless.

Among the unanswered questions in connection with the bullets used in the assassination is one that would occur to most hunters. Ordinarily, rifle bullets are sold in boxes of twenty. Any rifleman who is economical does not toss away the brass cartridge cases after he has fired a round. By saving

them and having them refilled, he can save a few cents on each bullet.

After the assassination, the investigators found three cartridge cases and one unfired cartridge in the Texas School Book Depository Building. In the extremely thorough search of the Depository, Lee's room in Oak Cliff, and Ruth Paine's home in Irving, no other cartridges or cartridge cases belonging to Lee were ever found. This puzzles me. I have sometimes wondered whether someone—not one of the investigators—knew where those other sixteen cartridges or cartridge cases were, or accidentally found them, and destroyed them or concealed them.

It is possible, of course, that Lee himself disposed of the other cartridges and cartridge cases before November 22. I find this difficult to believe, because there was nothing intrinsically incriminating in them. It would have made far more sense for him to dispose of the three cartridge cases and the cartridge found in the Depository building.

But this is a minor question. The theory about the single bullet causing injuries to the President and Governor Connally raises some major ones. I myself believe the Commission caused unnecessary doubts about its entire investigation by accepting this theory.

Lee had more time to plan and line up the first shot than the second and third, and I do not find any persuasive evidence that it missed. I'm convinced that the first shot hit the President in the neck, the second struck Connally, and the third actually killed the President.

President Kennedy and Governor Connally were almost captive targets in the car. Once the assassin had gotten one of them lined up as a target, he was undoubtedly clearly aware of the location of the second man in relation to the first. I believe he looked through the scope, aimed at the President, fired, moved

the rifle slightly, aimed at Connally, fired (taking a little less time than 2.3 seconds), then took more deliberate aim for the third and fatal shot at the President.

This will never be proved beyond doubt, of course, but as of this moment, after careful study of all the evidence and all the theories, I find this the strongest possibility.

I do not think Connally was shot because he happened to be the former Secretary of the Navy. If Vice-President Lyndon Johnson had been in the car with President Kennedy, I feel certain he would have been shot. A United States Senator, a cabinet member, or another governor might very well have suffered the same fate. At that moment, Lee was not shooting at a human being but at a prominent political figure who was receiving the applause of the crowd.

This was his final protest to a world that had ignored him, sometimes mocked him, always failed to acknowledge his superiority.

## *Chapter Thirteen*

MANY people who feel that the Warren Commission clearly established Lee's guilt are convinced that he was carrying out someone else's orders—and the two organizations most widely suspected are the CIA and the FBI.

I have studied the various reports about a number which Lee supposedly was given by the FBI—perhaps an informant number—and also the statements about mysterious payments he is reported to have received through a Western Union office in Dallas.

To those who did not know Lee, one of his actions in New Orleans might seem to prove the charge that he was secretly employed by the FBI for some confidential work. After he started his one-man Fair Play for Cuba committee in New Orleans, he was involved in a street scuffle with some anti-Castro Cubans and was arrested. He made a puzzling request to the New Orleans police that the FBI be told of his arrest. Some people have cited this as evidence that the FBI had asked Lee to start that Fair Play for Cuba activity to smoke out New Orleans citizens who were sympathetic to Castro. They are convinced that he was acting as a decoy for the FBI, and that he was counting on the FBI to get him out of jail after his assignment misfired.

Because of the nature of secret assignments, it is impossible

to *prove* that Lee was not carrying out some underground work for the FBI in New Orleans, but I do not believe that he was. I feel that the entire Fair Play for Cuba episode was just a dramatic gesture, a way of getting some attention. And once he was arrested, I'm convinced Lee decided both to impress and to mystify the New Orleans police by insisting that the FBI be informed.

Lee's lifelong enjoyment of intrigue, his use of false names, his mysterious behavior even when he had nothing to hide, all have helped keep alive the rumors of his supposed connections with the FBI and the CIA. Even District Attorney Henry Wade and Waggoner Carr, the attorney general of Texas, apparently became convinced during the early weeks of the investigation that Lee was either an informant or a secret agent.

My mother has managed to convince herself that Lee was recruited by a secret agency of the United States Government after he enlisted in the Marines. He was sent to Russia on some unexplained confidential mission, she believes, then brought back to the United States to carry out some other secret assignment—perhaps the assassination of President Kennedy. She is certain that all of his actions in the final months of his life were carried out at the direction of the CIA or some similar organization. She cites as one proof of her charge the fact that the State Department denied that Lee was on a secret mission to Russia. Naturally, she said, governments always deny that any secret agent is a secret agent, and therefore the State Department's refusal to admit that Lee was on a secret mission proves that he was.

I learned many years ago that my mother can see conspiracies in ordinary everyday activities. Since Lee's defection, she has detected countless mysterious actions by friends, members of her family, investigators, and high officials of the U. S. Government. She was convinced just after Jack Ruby's death that

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Ruby was not dead. False reports about his illness were circulated deliberately, she told me, to give the government an excuse to remove him from jail. Then he was taken to a hospital, and false reports about his decline and death were issued. Another man's body was buried in Ruby's grave, she said, and Ruby himself was then freed to carry out his next assignment—perhaps another assassination.

Because Lee did find intrigue a way of escaping the drabness of his daily life, he left behind a trail of mystery that has convinced many people who are not as gullible as my mother that he was an agent of some organization—the FBI, the CIA, the NKVD, Fidel Castro, the Communist Party, or some Far Right group. And Lee added to that impression because he enjoyed toying with people who interrogated him. He felt contempt toward almost anyone in authority, and particular contempt for the Dallas police and the FBI. During the weekend after his arrest in Dallas he was questioned for a total of twelve hours. He answered some of the questions he was asked—but only the unimportant ones. As soon as any interrogators began leading up to some central question, one they expected to help them determine Lee's guilt, he would begin fencing with them, trying to prove that he could outsmart them.

The men who conducted that investigation in Dallas have been criticized, correctly, for their slipshod procedures. For one of the most important police operations of the twentieth century, they failed to tape-record the questions and answers or to keep even the sketchiest kind of stenographic record. (This is more surprising to those who did not see the total confusion at the Dallas police station that weekend than it is to me.) But I don't think the most skillful interrogators in the United States could have tricked Lee into saying more than he wanted to say, and I doubt that he would ever have confessed his guilt to the police, the FBI, the Secret Service, a

district attorney, or the members of a Presidential commission if he had lived.

H. D. Holmes, a postal inspector who was present at the final questioning session on Sunday morning, just before Lee was taken downstairs to his death, said later that Lee "at no time appeared confused or in doubt," and added: "I personally doubted whether he would ever have confessed."

I have no way of knowing whether Lee might have settled forever in my own mind the question of his guilt, but it is at least possible that he would have. As we talked that Saturday afternoon before his death, I felt that the police interrupted our conversation just when we were approaching the point where he might have said something that would have made his motives clear to me even if he did not say in so many words that he had killed President Kennedy. This, of course, is pure speculation.

Despite the lingering doubt caused by the fact that Lee did not say directly to me that he fired those shots, I have been forced to conclude that Lee did wound Governor Connally and kill President Kennedy—and that he acted alone, although others may have encouraged or influenced him.

I have examined carefully every statement I could find about a second assassin joining in the attack on the President and Governor Connally. Some critics of the Warren Commission are certain that one bullet, fired from some spot in front of the Presidential procession, struck the President in the throat and exited from his back, while another struck the back of the President's head.

Ordinarily, there would be a simple test for this theory. An exit wound often has a kind of ragged edge, and a doctor who examines a body closely can sometimes say without hesitation where a bullet entered the body and where it exited. This is not always true, however, and from time to time an entrance

wound has been mistaken for an exit wound and an exit wound for an entrance wound. I believe the doctors at Parkland, who were doing everything they could to save the President's life, made such an error in their first hurried examination, and that the doctors who performed the autopsy at Bethesda were able to correct it.

But if the doctors at Bethesda were wrong, we are left with several other puzzling questions. Would the second assassin fire a single shot, striking the President in the throat without necessarily endangering his life, then stop firing? Or did he fire so wildly that after that first shot all of his other bullets went completely astray? He did not hit the windshield (despite the confusing early statements about that). He did not hit any other part of the Presidential car. He did not hit any member of the crowd, although he would have been firing toward the people gathered in the area, rather than away from the crowd, as Lee was. He did not hit any of the other cars in the Presidential procession. As far as anyone has demonstrated, he did not hit the sidewalk, any of the buildings in the area, any signs, or any other possible targets. No single bullet that he fired has ever been located. No shell casings have turned up.

This does not prove conclusively that there was not a second person in the Plaza area who planned to join in the assassination. Some witnesses have said that another man carrying a rifle was present there that Friday. If so, I believe that he was frightened and ran off. I do not believe anyone else actually joined in the attack on the Presidential motorcade.

I am convinced that Lee could easily have chosen as his victim someone entirely different politically from John F. Kennedy. I do not know that he actually had any plan to shoot Richard M. Nixon, but it is entirely possible that he would have tried to kill Nixon if he had been given the opportunity. It is even possible that he would have fired at Nikita Khrushchev.

shchev if Khrushchev had been honored by the kind of motorcade that honored President Kennedy.

The fact that there was no understandable political motivation behind the assassination may be one reason so many critics have been unable to accept the central conclusion of the Warren Commission—that there was one assassin, and that his name was Lee Harvey Oswald.

When the first critics began expressing doubts about the Warren Commission findings, I read their words eagerly. Certainly no one in the world wanted proof of Lee's innocence more than I did.

My early interest in the statements, articles and books soon turned to bewilderment as the critics began making wilder and wilder charges and implying that hundreds or even thousands of people had joined in some gigantic conspiracy first to assassinate the President, then accuse an innocent man of the assassination, then murder him, and finally to cover up the conspiracy by staging a phony investigation headed by the Chief Justice of the United States and carried out by distinguished national figures of both political parties.

As the tempo of the attacks increased, I was amazed that the work of several of the critics was taken seriously by anyone. These men looked for and found the minor discrepancies and apparent contradictions that do undoubtedly exist in the twenty-six volumes, and treated each of them as though it was proof of some elaborate attempt to deceive the American people. For example, some have dwelt at length on Lee's exact movements in the period just after the assassination, and have charged that the Commission's story of just how Lee got from the Texas School Book Depository to the Texas Theatre is inaccurate. If these critics could prove conclusively that Lee was not in the Texas School Book Depository at the time of the assassination or that he was not at the scene of the Tippit

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murder at 1:15 or 1:16 P.M., or that he was not in the Texas Theatre a few minutes later, then they would raise fundamental questions about the Commission's major finding. But even if they succeed in proving that Lee was on a bus three minutes longer than the Commission said, or caught a taxi at a point three or four blocks from the place named by the Commission, or walked along a different route before the encounter with Tippit, I do not think they have proved anything of particular significance. This meticulous double-checking of the Commission's report is harmless, as long as the critics do not assume that everyone who disagrees with them is part of some enormous conspiracy, but I do not see that it contributes anything to our fuller understanding of what happened that day in Dallas and why.

I doubt that *Rush to Judgment* or *The Second Oswald* or *Inquest* or *Whitewash* or *Whitewash II* will be considered anything more than curiosities in the years ahead. They do appeal to those readers who find the mysterious and unknown more interesting than the factual account, however incomplete and flawed, put together by the Warren Commission.

*Death of a President* is in an entirely different category, of course. This is an impressive work by a writer of genuine stature, and William Manchester is undoubtedly correct when he states in his foreword, "In time I myself shall merely become a source for future historians as yet unborn." Because of the importance of his book, I feel that the passage in it referring to Lee's burial should be corrected. On page 568, Mr. Manchester writes:

The Secret Service had assumed responsibility for the burial, and Marguerite had chosen Rose Hill Cemetery in Fort Worth, thirty miles away. Two Rose Hill workmen were told Monday morning to dig a grave for one "William Bobo." The fiction didn't deceive them long; when Oswald's cheap, moleskin-cov-

ered pine box arrived, it was accompanied by a hundred Fort Worth policemen, who sealed off the area to protect Marguerite, Robert, Marina, and her two children. The lid was raised. Forty reporters peered over the officers' shoulders. Marina, who had been following TV and was learning about images, kissed her husband and put her ring on his finger.

I realize that this is only a casual paragraph in a long and complex book, and I do not doubt that Mr. Manchester is reporting what someone told him. But the facts are that I assumed responsibility for the burial and chose Rose Hill Cemetery. And I do not feel that the coffin supplied by a sympathetic funeral home director can be honestly described as a "cheap, moleskin-covered pine box." It was a simple coffin, protected from ghouls by a metal vault, and I have since learned that the cost to the family was about the same as the amount most American families pay for a coffin and funeral service.

This may seem of no great importance to others, but I know that we did what we could to pay our respects to the boy and young man we had known and loved for years before he turned to violence.

Although I am not in sympathy with those writers who have been called "the scavengers of the Warren Commission report," I recognize that Commission members left many questions unanswered. One of the most significant of these, I feel, is the question of whether or not a police car stopped by the rooming house where Lee was getting his jacket and pistol about half an hour after the assassination. This is the Commission's summary of this report:

The possibility that accomplices aided Oswald in connection with his escape was suggested by the testimony of Earlene Roberts, the housekeeper at the 1026 North Beckley rooming-house. She testified that at about 1 P.M. on November 22, after

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Oswald had returned to the roominghouse, a Dallas police car drove slowly by the front of the 1026 North Beckley premises and stopped momentarily; she said she heard its horn several times. Mrs. Roberts stated that the occupants of the car were not known to her even though she had worked for some policemen who would occasionally come by. She said the policemen she knew drove car No. 170 and that this was not the number on the police car that honked on November 22. She testified that she first thought the car she saw was No. 106 and then said it was No. 107. In an FBI interview she had stated that she looked out the front window and saw Police Car No. 207. Investigation has not produced any evidence that there was a police vehicle in the area of 1026 North Beckley at about 1 P.M. on November 22. Squad car 207 was at the Texas School Book Depository Building, as was car 106. Squad cars 170 and 107 were sold in April 1963 and their numbers were not reassigned until February 1964.

I find this summary completely inconclusive. Mrs. Roberts was treated as a responsible witness by the Commission, and her testimony alone placed Lee at the house at 1026 North Beckley at 1 P.M. on November 22, 1963. How could the Commission decide that she was right when she supplied that information, but wrong when she made her firm statement about the police car stopping and honking? Her uncertainty about the precise number does not seem surprising to me. She did say flatly that it was a police car, that it did honk several times, and that this happened while Lee was in the rooming house.

I think this will remain forever one of the mysteries surrounding the assassination. Mrs. Roberts is now dead. The occupants of that police car—and I personally believe they did stop in front of the house and honk just as Mrs. Roberts said—apparently decided four years ago to keep silent. They may have been on some relatively innocent mission. Perhaps they were policemen who were off their assigned beat and had

stopped at the wrong house to greet a friend. Or they may have had some less innocent purpose in mind. I do not think we will ever know why that particular police car stopped at that particular house at that moment in history.

I am certain there are other mysteries in connection with the assassination, and I would never attempt to discourage anyone from any serious investigation of any aspect of this tragedy. When District Attorney Jim Garrison of New Orleans first launched his investigation, I waited with interest for some important new revelation. I am still waiting.

While I am ready at any time to be convinced that the Warren Commission was wrong, I have not yet read or heard or seen any evidence that has shaken my conviction that Lee and Lee alone fired the shots that wounded Governor Connally and killed the President of the United States.

I base my own judgment largely on the physical evidence and on the words spoken to me by Lieutenant Cunningham and Henry Wade in the first twenty-four hours after the assassination. Cunningham's account of Lee's strange behavior at the Texas Theatre and reports by both Cunningham and Wade of what various eyewitnesses had said made me impatient to hear some explanation from Lee. When I saw him on Saturday, he offered no explanation.

Despite the blunders by the Dallas police and the errors and omissions of the Warren Commission, I am convinced:

1. Lee ordered the 6.5-millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano from Klein's Sporting Goods Company in Chicago in March, 1963. Handwriting experts told the Commission that the mail-order form and the money order were in Lee's handwriting.

2. Lee received the rifle. It was mailed to Post Office Box 2915, Dallas, and this was the last address Lee gave to me for his mail. While he denied that he owned any rifle, Marina's

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testimony and the photographs found in the Paine garage on the afternoon of November 23 prove that he did own one.

3. The rifle was taken from the Paine garage sometime before November 22, 1963. I believe it was taken by Lee when he made his unusual Thursday evening visit to the Paine home on November 21, 1963.

4. Lee did have a package with him when he went to the Texas School Book Depository on Friday morning, November 22, 1963. If the package actually contained curtain rods—as he told Buell Wesley Frazier, the neighbor who drove him to work—then those curtain rods have never turned up after the most intensive search of the Depository building.

5. Lee did have the general opportunity to shoot at the President without being seen by anyone else at the Depository. Charles Givens, who was working with a floor-laying crew on the sixth floor, saw Lee on the fifth floor around 11:50 or 11:55 A.M. on November 22, 1963. Lee was then carrying a clipboard which was found ten days after the assassination hidden on the sixth floor. No one has ever come forward with any testimony that proves that Lee was not in that general part of the Depository building at the time of the assassination.

6. The 6.5-millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano, serial number C2766, was found on the sixth floor of the Depository building about 1:22 P.M. on November 22, 1963. The rifle still had one live round in it. About ten minutes earlier three empty cartridge cases had been discovered near the window in the south-east corner of the sixth floor. Unfortunately, an officer—Deputy Constable Seymour Weitzman—said the weapon was a 7.65 Mauser bolt-action rifle. He made that statement before he had taken the trouble to examine the weapon closely, and he was wrong—as he later admitted. Actually, there are certain resemblances between the 7.65 Mauser bolt-action rifle and the 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano, and under ordinary circumstances

the officer's casual statement would have been treated as an unfortunate but unimportant error—as though he had said a suspect was "about 5 feet 9 inches" when he was actually 5 feet 8 inches. The error Weitzman made does not alter the fact: Less than an hour after the assassination, the Dallas police had found in the Texas School Book Depository Building the rifle mailed to Lee from Chicago about seven months earlier.

7. Lee did leave the Depository building almost immediately after the assassination.

8. Lee did return to the rooming house at 1026 North Beckley about one o'clock on November 22, 1963, and left three or four minutes later.

9. Police Officer J. D. Tippit was shot near the intersection of Tenth and Patton, a few blocks from the rooming house, at approximately 1:16 P.M.

10. When Lee was arrested at the Texas Theatre, about eight blocks from the spot where Tippit was shot, between 1:45 and 1:50 P.M., he had a Smith & Wesson .38 Special caliber revolver, serial number V510210. Four cartridge cases found a few minutes later in the shrubbery at the corner of Tenth and Patton by three eyewitnesses had been fired from that particular pistol, according to expert testimony.

11. Lee had ordered that revolver in January or February, 1963, from Seaport Traders, Inc., of Los Angeles. He had used the alias "A. J. Hidell," and had used the same address he gave me and later used in ordering the rifle—Box 2915, Dallas, Texas.

12. Five different people picked out Lee as the man they had seen shoot J. D. Tippit or run from the scene of the shooting, emptying his revolver as he ran.

I do not believe any one of these twelve statements can be disproved, and I find only one explanation for this sequence of events: Lee shot President Kennedy, Governor Connally,

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and Officer J. D. Tippit. I kept my mind open for other explanations as long as I could, and I am ready at any time to be proven wrong. But those who chip away at details in the twenty-six volumes issued by the Warren Commission seem to me to accomplish nothing unless they can offer some alternate explanation for this series of actions by Lee between January, 1963, and November 22, 1963.

## *Chapter Fourteen*

**I**N July, 1964, I received a telephone call from Wesley J. Liebeler.

"Hello, Robert," he said. "This is Liebeler. Do you remember me?"

"Certainly I do," I said.

Liebeler, an assistant counsel for the Warren Commission, told me he was somewhere up in Vermont, in an isolated cabin or ski lodge, working on one chapter of the Commission's report. He had now reached the point in the chapter where he wanted to reveal Lee's motive for shooting the President, he said, and that was why he was calling me. "When you want to know something," he said, "you go directly to the man who should know the answer."

I was astonished by his question. The Commission had spent months in "exhaustive examination of every particle of evidence it could discover," as Harrison E. Salisbury wrote. Yet here suddenly, after taking the testimony of hundreds of witnesses, a member of the Commission staff was asking me to answer during a brief telephone conversation one of the most important questions about the entire case.

I have always disliked dealing with important matters by telephone, and I had no intention of offering Liebeler a glib answer. I told him that I could not give my theory about Lee's

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motives before making a serious study of everything the Commission itself had found during its investigation.

Obviously I had spent many hours since November 22, 1963, in trying to find the answer to the question Liebeler asked me. But I had withheld judgment partly because I expected the vast authority and resources of the Commission to help me and others understand just what led to that moment of violence in Dealey Plaza. The casual call from Liebeler made me wonder whether I had placed too much faith in the Commission.

When the report appeared in September, I realized that the Commission had failed completely in its search for the answer to the question, Why? The few paragraphs in the summary report devoted to the subject of motive seemed to reflect the surprising uncertainty I had detected in Liebeler's voice during our telephone conversation. After offering a few generalizations that could apply to many people who have never committed any serious crime, the Commission confessed:

...the Commission does not believe that it can ascribe to him any one motive or group of motives.

Earlier, someone on the Commission staff had recognized the importance of exploring this question. Three psychiatrists had been asked to serve as consultants to the Commission. But their analyses are not included in the report. The Commission decided to withhold any "psychiatric conclusions," Dr. D. A. Rothstein, one of the three psychiatrists, reported in September, 1966, and to limit itself to offering "essentially only the relevant basic information, which the reader might then utilize in arriving at his own conclusions."

Obviously Dr. Rothstein was puzzled by the Commission's failure to follow through on its earlier plan and to make available to readers of the report some kind of psychiatric analysis.

Dr. Rothstein wrote that he had unearthed the fairly primi-

tive studies made of two earlier Presidential assassins, Charles Guiteau, who shot President James A. Garfield, and Leon F. Czolgosz, the assassin of President William McKinley. "I was particularly impressed by the paucity of information and conclusions in those early papers which we would today consider psychiatrically relevant," he said. "I could not help but be impressed by the difference in psychiatric thinking which has occurred over these years, making the earlier papers seem quaint and archaic." But then he added: "I cannot help but wonder what psychiatric readers half a century hence will think of our feeble attempts to understand the event of November, 1963."

Dr. Rothstein's own comments about motive in the brief paper he published in September, 1966, interested me and suggested some aspects of Lee's life that should be explored by other psychiatrists. I am certainly no authority in this field, but I am familiar with some details of Lee's life that seem to me significant. From my own knowledge, the factual revelations in the Warren Commission report, and Dr. Rothstein's tentative theories, I feel that a beginning could be made in understanding what led to the assassination. I was particularly struck by this statement by Dr. Rothstein: "Ironically enough, despite Lee's hostility to his mother, he may have revealed his attachment to her by acting out through the assassination his conception of her own wish to become famous. . . ." He also mentions three other factors that might account for the final explosion: "the importance of an older brother's more successful military career"; "a history of suicidal attempt or gesture"; "a recent rejection by a significant female."

I can confirm the importance of one of these factors in Lee's life. I know that he dreamed of a successful military career through most of his early life. He was fascinated by everything John and I could tell him about life in a military school. He

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asked endless questions about life in the Marines, and his strongest ambition was to do as well as—or better than—John and I had done in military service.

I did not know until I had studied the Warren Commission volumes that he was still thinking of these matters in the final months of his life. His own years in the Marine Corps gave him little satisfaction and ended in failure. But he had paid close attention to the details of my activities in the Marines. Two of his job application forms bear this out.

In July, 1962, Lee applied for a job with the Louv-R-Pak division of the Leslie Welding Company in Fort Worth. He was asked to list his experience, and he printed these words:

Active Duty  
USMC

MichiNist  
AND SHeeT  
MeTAl  
woRKer

Both these claims were false. I had gone through metalsmith school in the Marines and had also worked for awhile in the Corps as a machinist. Lee had borrowed my experience and qualifications.

Later, in New Orleans, Lee made a different use of part of my military background when he applied for a job with the William B. Reily Company. He listed three references:

John Murrett  
Sgt. Robert Hidell  
Lt. J. Evans

The first name was real—the name of one of our cousins in New Orleans. The other two were fictitious, and I feel certain that the rank and first name in “Sgt. Robert Hidell” referred to me. I was a sergeant in the Marine Corps, and Lee always called me Robert, not Bob.

There have been three interpretations of the origin of the name Hidell. Just after the assassination of President Kennedy, two rather melodramatic explanations were given. Some people assumed that the name was based on the evil Mr. Hyde character in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Others, after hearing about Lee's activity in the Fair Play for Cuba committee in New Orleans, developed the theory that it was based on the first name of Fidel Castro. The third explanation seems more likely to me: Lee had a friend in the Marine Corps who was nicknamed Hidell. Since he ordinarily formed fictitious names by combining parts of the actual names of people he knew, I believe "Sgt. Robert Hidell" was a combination of my rank, my first name, and his friend's nickname.

Lee's use of my Marine Corps experience, my rank, and my first name on these two application forms surprised me, but other revelations in the Warren Commission report were much more disturbing and difficult to understand. As I examined the twenty-six volumes, I suddenly realized one day that Lee committed the most reckless acts of his life on dates which had particular significance in my life.

April 7 is my birthday. On April 7, 1963, Lee took his newly purchased rifle out to the home of General Edwin Walker with the intention of shooting him.

April 10 is the birthday of my son, Robert Edward Lee Oswald. On April 10, 1963, Lee again went out to General Walker's home, stood there in the darkness, and fired through a glass window at the general.

November 21 is the anniversary of my marriage to Vada. On our seventh anniversary, November 21, 1963, Lee rode to Irving to pick up the rifle which he used the next day to kill President Kennedy.

Maybe these are simply coincidences. I do not know. But

Lee was conscious of the importance of these three days in my life. He once wrote me from Russia to ask just when my birthday was. (He had got the idea from somewhere that I was born in July.) And he reacted with unusual enthusiasm to the news about the birth of my son and often included greetings to Robert, Jr., in his letters.

Lee's own intense desire for a son is demonstrated in some autobiographical notes he prepared while he was in Russia. Reproduced on page 435 of Volume 16 of the Warren Commission hearings, the notes include this poignant line, written while Lee and Marina were awaiting the birth of their first child: "David Lee Oswald, Son, American."

After I noted these dates, I recalled a puzzling question raised during my appearance before the Commission. Jenner asked me whether I had seen two films—*Suddenly* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. I had not, and therefore I did not understand what point he had in mind. When I did see *The Manchurian Candidate* on television later, it shocked me. In the film, Laurence Harvey plays the part of an American soldier who is captured and brainwashed by the Red Chinese. He is placed under deep hypnosis and then programmed to kill whenever he is shown a particular card—the queen of diamonds, I believe. Then he returns to the United States to carry out an assassination.

The Commission seemed to be exploring the possibility that Lee could have been subjected to some kind of brainwashing by the Russians, and that the assassination of President Kennedy might have followed some preselected signal. I have sometimes considered, with great skepticism, that these three dates in my own life could have served as signals for carefully programmed acts of violence—but I find this too preposterous to consider seriously. Therefore I was surprised when *Esquire* reported in 1966 that the Warren Commission had been in-

formed by one CIA agent that “the theory that Oswald might have been brainwashed and conditioned as a sleeper assassin, then . . . went haywire, was accidentally turned on” was “still a main school of thought of the CIA.”

My own feeling is that a psychiatrist might read into Lee’s actions on those three dates a much more deeply rooted kind of mind-conditioning, a natural mind-conditioning that had nothing at all to do with the Russians but grew out of Lee’s whole life.

When did Lee’s failures cause him to decide that he had only one hope of attracting the attention he so desperately wanted? When did his harmless interest in intrigue and make-believe become so strong that he could no longer distinguish between the real world and the melodramatic world of his imagination?

In examining his life, I have often felt that the first disturbing action occurred when he was thirteen. It seemed relatively unimportant at the time, and it was not unusual, but when Lee became a truant from school I feel that he also became a truant from life. This was his first open rejection of the rules that most people live by. But he did not yet resort to violence.

During the following ten years, Lee grew increasingly contemptuous of the rules—in school, in the Marine Corps, in Russia—but he still kept his hostilities in check. Many people who knew him during these years called him “standoffish” or “unfriendly” or “a loner”—but not violent. When New York City school authorities questioned him, he withdrew, saying, “I don’t need any help”—but he didn’t strike out at the people he resented. Except for the time he slapped Mother, I don’t remember anybody mentioning that Lee physically assaulted anybody during that stormy adolescent year.

In the Marines he was court-martialed for unauthorized possession of a pistol—not for using it. His second court-martial

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grew out of verbal insults to a sergeant, not a physical attack. In Russia, even after he became disillusioned, there is no record that he ever picked a fight with anybody.

It was only after his return to the United States that the pattern began to change. Marina, who was closest to him then, was the first person to feel the boiling over of Lee's suppressed anger. When he began to slap her and beat her she realized how radically he was changing. "I did not know him as such a man in Russia," she told the Warren Commission. Marina's Russian friends became aware of Lee's violent outbursts when they saw the bruises and black eyes—but I saw none of this. Often I saw Lee morose and depressed, but not violent.

The unrewarding, undemanding job at Louv-R-Pak, where he worked when he first returned to Fort Worth, increased his resentment—but he never walked off the job in a fit of temper.

When I saw Lee on Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 1962, he seemed preoccupied, a little tired, perhaps discouraged, but there was no hint of fury seething beneath the surface. The next time I saw him—a year and a day later, on November 23, 1963—that fury had erupted in the desperate act of violence that made it impossible, at last, for the world to ignore him anymore.

What had happened to Lee during that missing year? The events of his life during that year, between November 22, 1962, and the same date in 1963, were made known to me gradually. Newspaper reports published during the last few days of his life and immediately after his death revealed to me how very little I had known about my brother's activities since our Thanksgiving reunion. Some of these activities were made known to me even later, only after the publication of the Warren Commission findings. I felt as if I were reading about a stranger.

LEE—Part Four

After our Thanksgiving meeting, Lee and I didn't lose track of each other completely—not at first. At Christmas Vada and I sent a present to June Lee. On January 10, we received a note from Lee:

DEAR ROBERT,

Sorry I took so long in saying "Thank you" for the nice Xmas present you sent June. I was out of town for a few days so I didn't hear about it until after Xmas. Please send Pic my regards when you write him, I seem to have mislaid his address.

Your brother,

LEE

P.S. Marina says "Hello."

He said nothing about his work or his family life. I still had no address for him other than the post office box number in Dallas.

Three months elapsed between this note and the next letter from Lee, but that was not unusual. We usually wrote to each other every four to six months, unless something special came up.

Something special did come up for Vada and me. In mid-February the Acme Brick Company, where I had been employed since 1960, gave me a chance to move ahead in the company. The first step was a transfer from the general offices in Fort Worth to the manufacturing plant in Malvern, Arkansas. I wanted to write to Lee about the move, but we were so busy packing furniture and trying to sell the house that I didn't get around to it until after we left Fort Worth.

The day we arrived in Malvern—March 5, 1963—I mailed a letter to Lee, addressed to his box number in Dallas. I told him about the new job and our rented house and said I hoped he and Marina could visit us.

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Within ten days I received an answer—a cheerful letter, congratulating me on my job, relaying Marina's comments, telling about June's new teeth. "My work is very nice," he wrote. "I will get a rise in pay next month, and I have become rather adept at my photographic work. It is very interesting for me."

I did not know that Lee's photographic work, just three days before he answered my letter, had included a secret job his employers knew nothing about. On the weekend of March 9–10 Lee had photographed an alleyway behind the home of General Edwin Walker. Then he took pictures of the back of Walker's house. On March 12, the day before he wrote to me, he had ordered a rifle from Klein's Sporting Goods Company in Chicago. He signed the order with the name "A. Hidell."

In his letter to me, Lee asked again about John and said that he and Marina would like to visit us if they could. I had asked him for his address and telephone number, but he didn't give them. "We don't have a phone," he wrote, "and we have moved to this new apartment just March 2nd, so it would be better for you to write to me at P.O. Box, since I shall always have it."

That was all. It was the last letter I ever had from my brother. I wrote to him again in the summer, saying we would be back in Texas for our vacation in August, visiting Vada's family at the farm, and I would like to see him. I heard nothing.

In September, quite suddenly, I was told that I would be promoted to Sales Co-ordinator for Acme Brick in Denton, Texas. With no more than a week's notice, we moved again on September 15 or 16. I wrote to Lee to give him our address and sort of chewed him out for not answering my earlier letter. Still no answer. In November I began to think about the holidays and wondered if we could get together again for Thanks-

giving or Christmas. If he and Marina were still in Dallas—just thirty miles away—it would be easy to arrange. Perhaps, I thought, he hadn't received my letters and didn't know we were in Denton. When I saw him in the Dallas jail on Saturday night, November 23, he asked me about Denton, so I knew he had received them.

Our conversation was much too brief for Lee to tell me anything about what had happened to him between our two November meetings. Gradually, and much later, as I learned more about that missing year, I learned about my brother's hidden life. I discovered a series of events—some puzzling, some ominous—that led, step by step, to the final tragedy:

January or February: Lee orders the pistol from Seaport Traders, Inc., using the name A. J. Hidell.

February: The beginning of the friendship between Ruth Paine and Marina, which apparently contributes to Lee's feeling of rejection and failure.

March: Lee orders the rifle from Klein's Sporting Goods Company, again using the name Hidell. He photographs General Walker's home.

April: Lee goes out to General Walker's home with the intention of shooting him, then returns three days later and actually fires a shot at Walker. He is fired from his job and leaves for New Orleans. Marina and June remain with Ruth Paine.

May: Lee becomes intensely interested in his family background. He asks an aunt and a cousin to tell him everything they know about his father, and goes to the cemetery to look for his father's grave. After calling up several Oswalds listed in the telephone book, he calls on the widow of our father's brother, William Stout Oswald, and brings back a picture of Dad.

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June: After sending for Marina and June, he tells Marina that he wants to go back to Russia or to Cuba. Then he tells her he wants her to go back to Russia alone. He forms what apparently was a one-man Fair Play for Cuba committee.

July: Lee is fired again after his employers say he spends too much time reading gun magazines and neglects his work.

August: Lee passes out Fair Play for Cuba leaflets and is arrested after a dispute with three anti-Castro Cubans. He defends Castro in a television debate.

September: Marina returns to Texas, again dependent on Ruth Paine. Lee goes to Mexico, apparently to arrange for a trip to Cuba.

October: Lee returns to Dallas after the failure of his Mexico venture. Ruth Paine continues to provide a home for Marina, while Lee lives in a Dallas rooming house under an assumed name. Ruth Paine helps him find a job—at the Texas School Book Depository.

When I look at the pattern of that year, I believe that Lee's decision to gain attention through violence was made in March, 1963, when he ordered a rifle under an assumed name.

What was the point of using the name A. Hidell? None that I can see. It was just a gesture. He had rented the post office box to which the rifle was to be sent under his own name, and he knew enough about police procedures by then to realize that it would be relatively simple to trace the actual ownership of the rifle if the police ever became interested enough to make the attempt. If he had been trying to conceal the ownership of the rifle, he could have rented a different post office box for that special purpose, using the same fictitious name that he used when ordering the rifle. That would have made the job of tracing the weapon's ownership more difficult for the police, and the question of whether A. Hidell and Lee Harvey Os-

wald were the same person could not have been answered so quickly.

The manufacture of draft cards and other documents that were obviously counterfeit, the use of a false name for no apparent reason when he rented the room in Oak Cliff, the attempt to infiltrate an anti-Castro group and then the effort to present himself as the leader of a pro-Castro organization, the hastily worked out plans for an escape to Cuba or Russia—all these actions seem to me to illustrate the disintegration of Lee during the final months of his life. He was desperate. He was reaching out in all directions, trying to find some way out.

The whole series of frustrations had now brought him to this final stage. The discouragements and disappointments beginning in his childhood, continuing through the school years and the years in the Marines, the death of his dream of a new life in Russia, the boring jobs back in the United States which made it impossible for him to support Marina adequately and gain some recognition as a man, even the fact that he hoped for a son and had two daughters instead—the whole pattern of failure through most of his twenty-three years led to the outbursts of violence in April and the final tragedy in November, 1963. The particular dates on which he took violent action could be entirely accidental. Or they could be the result of his realization that I had been lucky enough to achieve what he wanted and would never achieve—a certain success in military life, a happy marriage, a good job, reasonable financial security, and a son. On the three dates when I was most aware of my own good fortune, Lee tried to gain the world's attention through violence and destruction, perhaps because he had been ignored by too many people, dismissed as insignificant by others, and even treated with contempt by some.

That is not the whole explanation, of course. But during these four years of looking back over my brother's life, I

begin to understand the effect of a thousand rejections. The violent end of his life was determined, I believe, by the time he was thirteen. The only question was what form that end would take, and who would suffer from his desperate final actions. The answer is that we have all suffered. Perhaps at least we can also learn something from the tragedy.



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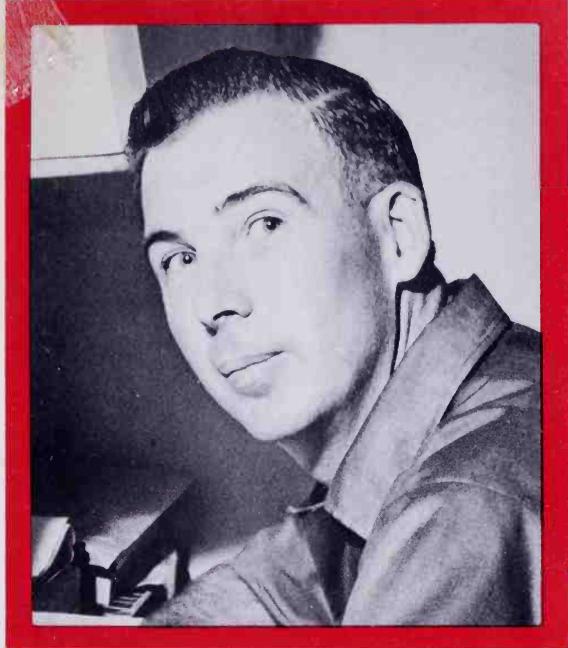
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